

**Written Testimony in Support of Utility Regulation -
Consideration of Climate and Labor (SB 656) Senate Finance
Committee | February 25, 2020**

My name is Isabel Kwass-Mason. I'm a senior in high school and I'm testifying in favor of legislation that requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) to implement a "climate test" during its decision-making processes.

I'm here today because I wake up every morning with an overwhelming sense of the climate crisis. I wake up with worry and anger looming over me. It's like a fog that pulls at my chest and clouds my mind. At times sitting in school feels worthless because the world I'm preparing for is so quickly disappearing.

I think about the climate constantly throughout my day because I see the unsustainable ways that we're living. I think about it every time I turn on the tap, every time I turn on a light, every time I eat a meal or get in a vehicle. Everytime I think about my own future.

I've sat with a group of friends as the weather began to warm and we've talked about how we don't think we'll be able to have children, even if that's something we really want. I've sat by the shore of Gunpowder Falls State Park and known that it will probably fall away to rising waters.

I go through my day knowing that my actions are contributing to the problem. And I can try to form better habits, change my consumption, and use fewer resources, but I don't have control over the ultimate sources that add carbon to the atmosphere.

A persistent dread is part of my daily life, and I'm not even on the frontlines of the climate crisis. If waters rise in Baltimore, I'll be able to move away from the place I love when others won't. Climate change is not an isolated issue. It is embedded in structures of oppression and inequality. It is a human rights crisis. And many of the people who have done practically nothing to cause or contribute to the crisis are already facing its worst effects.

To take on a crisis of these proportions, we need more than a general commitment of the state government. We need the climate to be an urgent priority for every branch and every agency of the government. Especially the Public Service Commission (PSC), an agency that determines our energy sources.

As legislators, you have the option to take action on the climate at a scale that the million young people in the state and the hundreds of millions in the world cannot. I sincerely hope you take that responsibility seriously.

I ask that you support this bill and require the Public Service Commission (PSC) to take the climate into account.