

**Committee: Finance Testimony on: SB0656 – “Utility Regulation - Consideration of Climate and Labor” Position: Support Hearing Date: February 25, 2020**

I am here to support SB 656, for the Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider climate change. I am an average retired mother and grandmother who has lived in Maryland all my life. I had been a bit of an activist in college but that changed after I graduated, married and had a child.

My daughter was born in 1970, the year of the first Earth Day. I had friends I admired who were excited and involved in Earth Day, but I was pregnant and working. After maternity leave I was a working mom. I didn't get involved.

I didn't get involved in public issues again until I retired. I got started getting concerned about climate change around the time of Al Gore's Inconvenient Truth movie which tried to convince the public of the reality of human caused climate change, and the fact that there are many things we can do about it.

I was one of the founders of a local group, Howard County Climate Action, [www.hococlimatechange.org](http://www.hococlimatechange.org). At first we focused on the individual actions people should take: buy hybrid cars, recycle, turn down the thermostat in winter and up in summer and more. I did all these things.

In a few years, I became a grandmother. This really focused my attention on the future for my daughter and now my grandson. And I kept hearing that the number of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere was rising, and that people, especially we in the developed world who are the bigger emitters, were not taking action fast enough.

The year my daughter was born, the year of the first earth day 50 years, the atmosphere was well below 350 ppm and the focus was on industrial water and air pollution, and beautification efforts. Although we know now many scientists were concerned, I didn't hear about climate change then.

But when Al Gore's movie, the Inconvenient Truth was released, global greenhouse gases (GHGo ppm were already well over 350. Al Gore was sounding an alarm for something that had already happened, although society did not yet connect the science to the daily weather and news

The year my grandson was born, atmospheric greenhouses were well over 350 ppm, and my local group, HoCoClimateAction, had already become a local group in a new international movement, 350.org, dedicated to reducing greenhouse gases to a "safe" level.

350.org takes seriously the statement by former NASA scientist, James Hansen: "If humanity wishes to preserve a planet similar to that on which civilization developed and to which life on Earth is adapted... CO2 will need to be reduced... to at most 350 ppm,"

I am thrilled that Maryland has been one of the more progressive states in passing clean energy legislation and leading the ways for states around us. I collected petitions for the Clean Cars Act and the Offshore Wind Act, and the Maryland Fracking Ban and more.

But my little group in Howard Co, and the international group 350.org have not been able to reduce the rise in greenhouse gases. Between 2013 and 2016 we were sad and horrified to see the atmospheric GHG parts per million exceeded 400. And we are on our way to 500 ppm in coming decades if we don't take dramatic action.

The last time the planet had a concentration of 300 to 400 ppm of CO2 equivalent in the atmosphere was during the mid-Pliocene, 3 million years ago, long before early humans walked the earth. Our species, Homo Sapiens showed up 400,000 years ago at the earliest.

The increase in GHG emissions in the atmosphere is the cause of global warming and we have now increased average temperatures by almost 1-degree celsius (1.71°F). Responding to the UN IPCC report, the Paris Climate Accords emphasized the urgency of keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. But to do this, global emissions will need to reach net-zero around mid-century.

Now that we are well over 400 ppm, we are seeing catastrophic climate change and with the rapid warming it will get worse fast. I live Howard County where Ellicott City saw two "hundred-year" floods in 2 years. But we read and hear about worse floods, and about droughts and migrations because of hunger and wars every day in the news.

Just as a member of the general public, I have attended some of the meetings of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and have heard briefings on Governor Hogan's plans to move Maryland into further action. Governor Hogan joined the "We are still in" movement to support the Paris Climate Accords. The two parties in Maryland may disagree on exactly how to solve the problem, but we don't deny the problem of climate change, nor the urgency.

Maryland is planning on large reductions in emissions from all sectors. See The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act: 2019 GGRA Draft Plan [https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/Pages/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions-Reduction-Act-\(GGRA\)--Draft-Plan.aspx](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/Pages/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions-Reduction-Act-(GGRA)--Draft-Plan.aspx) This plan includes the Governor's "CARES" plan for the electrical sector. "CARES would build off the existing Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), and require that 100% of Maryland's electricity come from clean sources by 2040, which is among the most ambitious goals in the nation."

I think it is critical that the Public Service Commission, which approves electrical infrastructure, is instructed to view its mission and its decisions in the context of Maryland's plan to transition to clean energy.

I urge passage of SB656/HR531. This is one step we can all take for our children and grandchildren.

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