



February 17, 2021

SUPPORT House Bill 630: School District Clean Energy Law

Chairwoman McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lynn Heller. I'm the founder and CEO of the Climate Access Fund, a statewide nonprofit Green Bank that is focused on reducing the electricity bills of low-income households through access to solar power. The Climate Access Fund uses flexible capital to incentivize solar developers and their investors to serve more low-income households than they otherwise would.

The Climate Access Fund supports HB 630, the School District Clean Energy Law, because we believe climate change is an urgent threat to Marylanders, especially to Marylanders living in underserved communities, and the state needs to take immediate action to reduce its impacts.

At the County level, school districts are among the highest emitters of greenhouse gas emissions. Many school buildings are old and energy inefficient. Requiring Maryland public schools to develop comprehensive school energy policies with targeted increases in energy efficiency and renewable energy, and requiring these plans to be updated every two years, is a necessary and important start to reducing schools' greenhouse gas emissions.

Ultimately, for school districts to be able to meet their energy efficiency and renewable energy targets, they will need additional funding. This is why HB 630 requires the Interagency Commission on School Construction to study and make recommendations on how to expand the Maryland Net Zero Energy School Initiative Grant Program.

In addition to laying the necessary groundwork for school districts' greenhouse gas emissions reductions, the School District Clean Energy Law would send an important message to our students and school communities – that climate change is a serious and urgent threat to public health and requires action now.

The Climate Access Fund urges a favorable report on HB 630, the School District Clean Energy Law.

Thank you.

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