



Committee: Economic Matters Committee
Testimony on: HB 298
Position: Favorable

On behalf of the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP and its 24 branches across the state I urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB 298 Utility Regulation – Consideration of Climate and Labor. The Public Service Commission has a responsibility to Marylanders to consider the devastating impacts of the climate crisis as well as to ensure that workers are treated equitably when making decisions regulating our energy use.

The Maryland State Conference of the NAACP has worked alongside many of you in this committee to pass landmark legislation such as the Clean Energy Jobs Act, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, Offshore Wind and many other initiatives to address the climate crisis – yet we also need the Public Service Commission to factor in climate change into their decision making.

To not factor in climate is to ignore the fact that 40% of the state’s emissions come from electricity generation. If Maryland wants to achieve its ambitious clean energy goals then its state agencies regulating our power and gas supply need to make climate a core consideration in their decision making.

The impacts of climate change are evident all-around Maryland. Ellicott City has experienced two 1000-year floods. Baltimore City suffers from one of the highest premature death rates due to air pollution and Prince George’s County received an F from the American Lung Association. And this summer we saw an increase in sunny day flooding in Annapolis and in our bay communities from Cambridge to Solomon’s Island. We have seen this firsthand with the devastating impacts of COVID-19 where black and Latino populations were crushed by COVID. One of the root causes of this is air pollution caused by powerplant smokestacks.

The PSC must consider climate in its decision making to help Maryland meet our ambitious climate goals and to protect the well-being and health of our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.