



## **Environment Committee**

**Committee:** Economic Matters

**Testimony on:** HB0030 - "Public Utilities – Office of Climate Counsel – Establishment (Climate Counsel Act)"

**Organization:** Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
**Person**

**Submitting:** Diana Younts, co-chair

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 4, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0030, the Climate Counsel Act, which will require Maryland to create the Office of Climate Counsel to evaluate the climate impact of matters pending before the Public Service Service Commission.

The Maryland Commission on Climate Change estimates that Maryland is the 4th most vulnerable state in terms of sea-level rise. Additionally, the Maryland Department of Environment estimates that electricity use accounts for 31% of the state's Greenhouse Gas emissions. Given the integral role the PSC plays in regulating electricity use and the electric industry in Maryland, Marylanders deserve to have an advocate with the PSC who is looking out for the state's environmental interests.

The Office of Climate Counsel would function similarly to that of the existing Office of People's Counsel (OPC), which although it advocates for ratepayers, it does not usually analyze environmental impacts. Maryland needs an Office of Climate to represent the environmental interests of Maryland and its residents on all matters before the PSC, to recommend legislation to the General Assembly on matters related to the PSC, and to be part of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change which is charged with developing action plans to combat the impact of climate change.

For these reasons we urge you to vote favorably for HB0030.