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Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair
Motor Vehicle and Transportation
Subcommittee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB33
The Climate Crisis and Education Act of 2021
Testimony by Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo
February 18, 2021- The Economic Matters Committee

I have heard the argument over and over... “It’s too expensive to transition to clean energy,” “if clean energy was economically viable, we would have switched over by now.” The dirty truth is that our dependence on fossil fuels continues to cost Maryland jobs, and hurts our economy. Maryland spends close to \$22 billion on fossil fuels per year, with most of this money leaving to go to fossil fuel producing states; and, to make matters worse, we consume more than five times as much energy as we produce.¹ Moving away from our reliance on fossil fuels will mean more money and jobs staying in Maryland. In addition, fossil fuel subsidies take money away from critically underfunded areas such as education, health, and climate change mitigation. HB33 will, for the first time, begin to level out the energy playing field by charging a fee on fossil fuels at first point of entry (Natural Gas, Petroleum, Coal; any solid, liquid, or gaseous fuel derived from Natural Gas, Petroleum, Coal).

HB33 will create revenue from the polluters themselves and will fund critical programs for Maryland. \$350 million a year will be provided to help fund the Kirwan Commission educational recommendations. In the first year, \$180 million would be used to reduce Maryland’s greenhouse gas emissions, build resilient infrastructure, and help transition workers to Maryland’s clean energy economy. This would grow to \$500 million by 2030, expanding the possibilities and projects for which the money could be used. \$490 million would also be given to low-income households and energy- intensive trade-exposed businesses to

protect them from financial harm. This would expand to over \$800 million by 2030 and can be used to help shift more workers and businesses towards clean energy to meet market demands.

This bill would help mitigate the harmful effects of climate change in Maryland.ⁱⁱ In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a special [report](#) outlining the consequences of inaction: If humanity does not combat climate change and keep global temperatures less than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, the oceans may continue to rise at their current rate of 3.2mm per year, resulting in them being a foot higher by the end of the century.ⁱⁱⁱ That means entire islands along the Chesapeake Bay and more vast swaths of Worcester, Wicomico, Somerset, Dorchester, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, and Harford Counties will be uninhabitable for future generations.^{iv} We have already lost Holland Island.^v Tangier and Smith Islands,^{vi} and countless others, are at risk of disappearing due to the rise in sea level.

A major source of our local culture, the United States Naval Academy, is at risk of flooding with each big storm – storms that get stronger and more frequent each year. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) projects that storms will grow more intense in terms of rainfall and destructive capacity.^{vii} We have already seen devastating flooding in Ellicott City^{viii} and the effects of stronger storm surges on our coastal cities, including Annapolis. If the climate change trend is not reversed, these weather events will only become worse.

Nowhere in the United States has the destruction wrought by climate change been clearer than in California and the entire West Coast, where wildfires tore through the landscape early last year, decimating homes and sending so much smoke into the atmosphere that it could be seen here in Maryland. These wildfires have become more common as the season of warm, dry, and windy weather expands each year.^{ix}

HB33 will make Maryland a leader in solving climate change, and will save the Chesapeake Bay and our state's natural landscapes. I ask you for a favorable report for HB33 to ensure that Maryland continues to lead the way in finding viable solutions to successfully address the economic and environmental harm caused by fossil fuels.



Flooded Hooper's Island Road Causeway; *Photo from Baltimore Magazine*



Flooded Downtown Annapolis; *Photo from the State of Maryland*



Last House on Holland Island Collapses; *Photo from The Seattle Times*



A California Wildfire; *Photo from Scientific American*

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- ⁱ [Maryland - State Energy Profile Analysis - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)
 - ⁱⁱ [Sea-Level Rise Projections for Maryland 2018_0.pdf \(umces.edu\)](#)
 - ⁱⁱⁱ [Climate Change – United Nations](#)
 - ^{iv} [The Sea Also Rises – Baltimore Magazine](#)
 - ^v [Chesapeake Quarterly Volume 13 Numbers 2 & 3: Vanished Chesapeake Islands](#)
 - ^{vi} [Chesapeake Bay’s Tangier Island a Symbol of How Rising Seas Will Swallow Whole Communities \(nationalgeographic.com\)](#)
 - ^{vii} [Global Warming and Hurricanes – NOAA](#)
 - ^{viii} [A Historic River Town Confronts a Flooded Future - Bloomberg](#)
 - ^{ix} [Climate Change Is Central to California’s Wildfires – Scientific American](#)