



Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony on: HB0030 - "Public Utilities – Office of Climate Counsel – Establishment (Climate Counsel Act)"
Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing
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.

MLC Climate Justice Wing:

Maryland Legislative Coalition
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
WISE
Frack Free Frostburg
Mountain Maryland Movement
Clean Water Action
Maryland Sierra Club
Howard County Indivisible
Howard County Sierra Club
Columbia Association Climate change and
sustainability advisory committee
HoCo Climate Action
CHEER
Climate XChange - Maryland
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/
National Parks Conservation Association
350 Montgomery County
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for
Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment
Committee
Audubon Naturalist Society

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Justice Ministry
Coalition For Smarter Growth
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign
Montgomery County DCC
Potomac Conservancy
Casa de Maryland
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Clean Air Prince Georges
Ji'Aire's Workgroup
Laurel Resist
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Unitarian Universalist Legislative
Ministry of Maryland
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos
Wicomico NAACP
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Chispa MD
Climate Law & Policy Project
Poor Peoples Campaign
Labor for Sustainability
The Nature Conservancy
Clean Air Prince Georges
350 Baltimore