



NAACP

Maryland
STATE CONFERENCE

HB0033 | Climate Crisis and Education Act

Position | Favorable
February 16, 2021

Testimony

I am here today to ask you to support House Bill 33, the *Climate Crisis and Education Act*, as a commonsense, practical pathway towards a cleaner, more sustainable, and economically prosperous Maryland.

By establishing fossil fuel fees, this bill will directly incentivize the reduction of CO2 emissions. Due to their role in a multitude of environmental disasters, fossil fuels are also driving disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic. Very small increases in exposure to pollutants from fossil fuel combustion greatly increases one's risk of dying from COVID-19. This is one of the many reasons why black Americans are twice as likely to die from COVID-19 than white Americans: as black Americans are 79% more likely to live near industrial pollution sites.

While fossil fuel pollution is already driving racial disparities in health outcomes, with black children being 500% more likely to die from asthma than white children, coupled with the devastating impacts of the pandemic, further demonstrate the urgency of addressing fossil fuel pollution now.

Furthermore, this bill has benefits beyond reducing fossil fuel emissions. It will generate billions of dollars for investment in clean energy infrastructure and our children's education, while protecting vulnerable workers and businesses through *the Household and Employer Benefit Fund*. The hundreds of millions of dollars for the *Kirwan Education Fund* will help address inequities in the Maryland public education system in part by increasing funds for low-income students, who are disproportionately students of color.

As the impacts of climate change threaten to exacerbate environmental injustices already confronting the most vulnerable communities in Maryland, HB 33 will counter this by facilitating a transition to a new clean energy economy that prioritizes our children's education, invests in resilient infrastructure, and protects low-income households and energy-intensive trade-exposed businesses.

This committee and the NAACP Maryland State Conference (MSC) have worked shoulder-to-shoulder to achieve great strides on past legislation. On behalf of the MSC, I'd like to thank you for your bold initiatives. The voters of Maryland have entrusted you with the power to make a positive difference, especially for those suffering the most. We hope you are, once again, bold enough to "step into that power" and give a favorable report on HB 33, *Climate Crisis and Education Act*. The well-being of Marylanders, the safety of our environment, and the longevity of our planet depend on it.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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