

**SB0518-FAV-DTMG-2-10-21.pdf**

Uploaded by: Bartlett, Olivia

Position: FAV



**Committee:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Testimony on:** SB0518 - Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 10, 2021

**Bill Contact:** Senator Klausmeier

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all the members of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG strongly supports SB0518 because Maryland needs a coordinated, government-wide effort to address climate change.

Climate change is already here and is an existential threat to the future health and safety of all Marylanders. Maryland already has nuisance flooding, high heat days, and storm surges on a regular basis. International experts have urged action on climate with increasing urgency to protect our children and grandchildren from the worst impacts of climate change.

Maryland has a number of programs that address climate change from various perspectives. What is lacking is a central office with authority to coordinate these programs across agencies. SB0518 will address this glaring gap in Maryland's climate responses by establishing the Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor to monitor ongoing efforts across agencies to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change and keep the Governor and the General Assembly informed.

The Office on Climate Change will also facilitate implementation of recommendations from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and ensure that each state agency considers and addresses climate change in its operations. The Office on Climate Change will also have the authority to initiate climate change research and investigations to fight climate change beyond those included in the Commission on Climate Change's recommendations. Importantly, the Office on Climate Change will assist local governments in development of local plans to combat climate change.

This is exactly the kind of coordination that will make individual programs in Maryland's disparate agencies and localities more effective. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0518 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett  
Co-lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team  
[oliviabartlett@verizon.net](mailto:oliviabartlett@verizon.net)  
240-751-5599

**BaltimoreCounty\_FAV\_SB0518.pdf**

Uploaded by: Conner, Charles

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.  
*County Executive*

CHARLES R. CONNER III, ESQ.  
*Director of Government Affairs*

JOEL N. BELLER  
*Deputy Director of Government Affairs*

**BILL NO.:**            **SB 518**

**TITLE:**                Environment - Office on Climate Change - Establishment

**SPONSOR:**            Senator Klausmeier

**COMMITTEE:**        Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

**POSITION:**         **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**                February 10, 2021

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 518 Environment - Office on Climate Change – Establishment. This legislation would establish the Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor to centralize climate change efforts across state government.

Climate change is no longer a matter to be dealt with in the future, but is presently causing devastation and requires immediate action. All government needs to have a coordinated interagency plan to deal with this all-encompassing problem. Knowing this, County Executive Olszewski appointed Steve Lafferty as Chief Sustainability Officer within the Executive Office to coordinate environmental efforts across Baltimore County Government. Mr. Lafferty was able to work with all departments and launch the Baltimore County Climate Action Plan. This helped focus all county agencies to work efficiently towards the same sustainability goals.

HB 503 would instate a Climate Change Office to coordinate climate efforts with the authority of the Governor’s Office. This office would also assist local governments who request services to improve climate efforts in their communities. This will help ensure a sustainable future for all current and future Marylanders.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 518. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs at [cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov).

**SB518\_IndivisibleHoCoMD\_FAV\_ElizabethFixsen.pdf**

Uploaded by: Deutschmann, Richard

Position: FAV



**SB518 - Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment  
Testimony before Senate Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs  
February 10, 2021  
Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB518** to establish an Office of Climate Change within the Governor's office. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

While we are encouraged by moves that President Biden is taking to combat climate change on a national and global level, it is imperative that states do their part. This bill would establish an Office on Climate Change (OCC) within the governor's office, using the governor's existing funds, as a way to centralize state efforts to combat climate change. The OCC would be tasked with implementing the recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change to advise the governor and General Assembly on ways to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

This bill would address the criticism of the 2020 report by the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, that it did not include recommendations for concrete action, and that there was no centralized group in the governor's office to coordinate state-wide efforts. This bill will put teeth into the commission's recommendations by requiring the governor's office to work with local governments on development of local plans to combat climate change. Furthermore, the proposed Office on Climate Change would ensure that each state agency considers how they can mitigate the causes and impacts of climate change and would conduct additional research on climate change when necessary.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Elizabeth Fixsen  
Savage, MD

Sources:

--Fiscal and Policy Note. Department of Legislative Services, Maryland General Assembly  
[http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/fnotes/bil\\_0008/sb0518.pdf](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2021RS/fnotes/bil_0008/sb0518.pdf)

--Bills Would Require State Agencies to Consider Climate Change in Key Decisions and Operations. (3 Feb. 2021) Maryland Matters. <https://www.marylandmatters.org/2021/02/03/bills-would-require-state-agencies-to-consider-climate-change-in-key-decisions-and-operations/>

**SB 518 - MoCo - CE (GA 21).pdf**

Uploaded by: Elrich, Marc

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

February 8, 2021

TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich  
County Executive

RE: SB 518 – *Environment - Office on Climate Change - Establishment* – Support

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I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 518. This bill establishes the Office of Climate Change within the Governor's Office. The Office of Climate Change will help facilitate the implementation of the Commission on Climate Change's recommendations and ensure that each State agency consider and address climate change as it relates to agency operations. In addition, the Office of Climate change will assist local governments in the development of climate change plans.

Three years ago, the Montgomery County Council declared a climate emergency and called upon on all levels of government to initiate a massive global mobilization to restore a safe climate and build a sustainable economy by eliminating greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. Over the past year, the County convened several technical workgroups that consisted of 150 community members and ultimately produced 850 climate planning recommendations for the County to consider. The County is currently working with a consulting team to finalize its Climate Action and Resilience Plan, set to be released this Spring. Senate Bill 518 will assist Montgomery County and other local governments in attaining their Climate Action goals.

For the aforementioned reasons, I support Senate Bill 518 and respectfully request a favorable Committee report.

cc: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee



# **SB518 - Environment - Office of Climate Change - E**

Uploaded by: Harbeson, Kristen

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEAGUE  
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

February 10, 2021

**SUPPORT- SB518: Environment-Office on Climate Change-  
Establishment**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee

**Maryland League of  
Conservation Voters**

Lynn Heller, Board Chair  
Maris St. Cyr, Vice Chair  
Michael Davis, Treasurer  
Hon. Virginia Clagett  
Stuart Clarke  
Candace Dodson-Reed  
Verna Harrison  
Melanie Hartwig-Davis  
Ed Hatcher  
Hon. Steve Lafferty  
Bonnie Norman  
Katharine Thomas

Kim Coble  
Executive Director

30 West Street  
Suite C  
Annapolis, MD 21401

410.280.9855  
mdlcv.org  
marylandconservation.org

Maryland LCV supports SB518: Environment-Office on Climate Change-Establishment, and we thank the sponsor for her leadership on this issue.

This year the Maryland General Assembly will, once again, be taking up legislation to take bold steps to address the growing crisis of climate change. With more than 3000 miles of shoreline, and more than 270,000 acres less than 10-feet above sea level, Maryland is one of the most vulnerable states in the nation to the effects of climate change. In addition to the rise in extreme weather events and other climate-change related natural disasters, many parts of Maryland are increasingly experiencing “sunny day flooding,” and extreme heat events that disproportionately affect communities already overburdened with pollution and negative health impacts. The policies outlined in SB518 would provide coordination at the top levels of our state government through the creation of an Office of Climate Change in the Governor’s office to ensure that our state has a central point of coordination to address the challenges Maryland is facing.

Maryland has a Climate Change Commission, with a mitigation working group co-chaired by the Executive Director of Maryland LCV. The Commission makes recommendations for state actions. The Office of Climate Change would take the next step to coordinate the implementation of these recommendations by centralizing current climate change initiatives throughout the state and assisting local governments who request services to improve climate efforts in their communities.

Maryland must take aggressive actions to stave off the most disastrous effects of climate change. But we must also address the impacts that have already arrived by coordinating the efforts of our local, county, and state agencies to build resiliency against future disaster. For this reason, Maryland LCV strongly supports this important bill and urges a favorable report on SB518.

# **SB 518 EHE LoS.pdf**

Uploaded by: Klausmeier, Katherine

Position: FAV

KATHERINE KLAUSMEIER  
*Legislative District 8*  
Baltimore County

—  
PRESIDENT PRO TEM EMERITUS

—  
Finance Committee

Executive Nominations Committee

—  
*Chair*

Baltimore County Senate Delegation



## *The Senate of Maryland*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

☐ *Annapolis Office*  
James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 123  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3620 · 301-858-3620  
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Katherine.Klausmeier@senate.state.md.us

☐ *District Office*  
4100 Walter Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21236

February 5, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

Please be advised that the Baltimore County Senate Delegation has given a Favorable Recommendation to **SB 518 – Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment.**

If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Klausmeier".

Kathy Klausmeier  
Chair, Baltimore County Senate Delegation

**MD Catholic Conference\_FAV\_SB0518.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kraska, MJ

Position: FAV



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**February 10, 2021**

**SB 518**

**Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment**

**Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 518 establishes the Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor to facilitate the implementation of the Commission on Climate Change's recommendations; requiring the Office to ensure that each State agency addresses ways the agency can mitigate the causes of climate change and certain impacts of climate change; requiring the Office to initiate and oversee certain research and investigations; requiring the Office to submit an annual report to the Governor and certain committees of the General Assembly.

The Conference supports environmental legislation that recognizes the integral ecosystem in which we live. In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si’)*, Pope Francis states that, “*What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal.*”

*Laudato Si’* is not an endorsement of specific public policy proposals; rather, it seeks to illustrate the importance of protecting our common home and issue guidance as to how to listen to all voices in solving this massive global crisis. Pope Francis explains that “[t]o take up these responsibilities and the costs they entail, politicians will inevitably clash with the mindset of short-term gain and results which dominates present-day economics and politics. But if they are courageous, they will attest to their God-given dignity and leave behind a testimony of selfless responsibility.”

Senate Bill 518 aims to address some of the needed reforms policies and standards to be set to sustain and achieve a healthy global ecosystem. We encourage discussion around the components and goals outlined in this legislation and hope they are a catalyst for meaningful ecological policy reform.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 518.



# **SB0518 MD NARAL SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Philip, Diana

Position: FAV





## **SB0518 - Environment - Office on Climate Change - Establishment**

Presented to the Hon. Paul Pinsky and  
Members of the Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee  
February 10, 2021 1:00 p.m.

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### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a **favorable report on SB0518 - Environment - Office on Climate Change - Establishment**, sponsored by Senator Kathy Klausmeier.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect reproductive freedom for all Marylanders, we work to ensure every individual has the right to decide if, when, and how to form their families, and to parent in good health, in safety, and with dignity. In doing so, we support the establishment of the Office on Climate Change to ensure the Commission's recommendations are implemented. The effects of climate change are increasingly threatening human health, with unique adverse reproductive and sexual health consequences related to air, water, and soil pollution, extreme heat, and natural disasters.

Research has demonstrated the reproductive health outcomes associated with environmental pollution include infertility, abnormal menstruation and puberty, endometriosis, recurrent pregnancy loss, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), fetal death, prenatal growth abnormalities, reduced gestational period, low birth weight,<sup>1</sup> pregnancy-induced hypertension and preeclampsia,<sup>2</sup> and genital and breast cancers.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, rising global temperatures is making heat a more serious threat to pregnant persons going forward; exposure to unusually hot temperatures can lead to changes in length of gestation, birth weight, stillbirth rates, and neonatal stress.<sup>4</sup> These health outcomes can cause enduring mental and physical trauma to pregnant persons and the infants they deliver. Substantial research has shown that low birth weight infants may be more at risk for many health problems; some may become sick in the first six days of life or develop infections, others can suffer from long term problems such as delayed motor skills and social development or learning disabilities.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, increased instances of natural disasters result in a disruption of reproductive health services which can lead to unplanned pregnancies; conversely, natural disasters can displace families and leave them

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<sup>1</sup> Rashtian, J. et al. "Water and soil pollution as determinant of water and food quality/contamination and its impact on female fertility." *Reprod Biol Endocrinol* 17, 5 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12958-018-0448-5>

<sup>2</sup> Wang, A et al. "Environmental influences on reproductive health: the importance of chemical exposures." *Fertility and sterility* vol. 106,4 (2016): 905-29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fertnstert.2016.07.1076>

<sup>3</sup> Bhatt, R.V. "Environmental Influence on Reproductive Health." *International Journal for Gynecology and Obstetrics*, 70: (2000) 69-75. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0020-7292\(00\)00221-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0020-7292(00)00221-6)

<sup>4</sup> Bekkar B, et al. "Association of Air Pollution and Heat Exposure With Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight, and Stillbirth in the US: A Systematic Review." *JAMA Netw Open*. (2020); 3(6):e208243. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.8243

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reproductive and Birth Outcomes and the Environment. Retrieved <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showRbBirthOutcomeEnv>

financially unstable resulting in reduced fertility.<sup>6</sup> In both cases, individuals lose their reproductive freedom to choose when to become pregnant.

The Commission on Climate Change has clearly outlined the threats of climate change to Marylanders with emphasis on the need to protect the most vulnerable populations, including low-income urban residents who are more exposed to environmental pollution and extreme heat, and coastal populations at higher risk of flooding and mold exposure.<sup>7</sup> Establishing the Office on Climate Change is essential to implement solutions which will mitigate further environmental degradation and protect human health and access to healthcare. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on SB0518**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<sup>6</sup> Tobin-Gurley, J., et al. "Displaced single mothers in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina: resource needs and resource acquisition." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*. (2010): 28, no. 2: 170-206

<sup>7</sup> Grumbles, B. "2020 Annual Report" Maryland Commission on Climate Change. November 15, 2020. Retrieved <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Commission/2020%20MCCC%20Annual%20Report%20DRAFT%2011.09.20%20Meeting.pdf>

# **SB518 - Office on Climate Change-Establishment - E**

Uploaded by: Tulkin, Josh

Position: FAV



7338 Baltimore Ave  
Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740

**Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

**Testimony on: SB518 “Office on Climate Change – Establishment”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: February 10, 2021**

Globally, nationwide, and in Maryland we are facing a growing, existential climate crisis. The signs are everywhere: unprecedented fires raging in California; record superstorms; analysis showing that the Colorado River has lost over a billion tons of water; huge decreases in winter snow in Maryland; flooding in Annapolis; and many, many more.

In Maryland, we have legislatively committed to significantly reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act declares that “[t]he State shall reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 2006 levels by 2030.” Envir. Art. sec. 2-1204. Legislation introduced this session – the Climate Solutions Now Act (HB583) – would update this target to 60% by 2030, to reflect recent analyses by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and require Maryland to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045.

This bill would help advance these efforts by establishing an Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor. We therefore urge a favorable report.

Mark Posner  
Legislative Chair  
Mark.Posner@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

**SB0518-EHE\_MACo\_SWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Butler, Alex

Position: FWA



## **Senate Bill 518**

### *Environment - Office on Climate Change - Establishment*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental  
Affairs Committee

Date: February 10, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 518 with amendments. The bill would establish the Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor, responsible for a multitude of actions surrounding the State's response to climate change. MACo amendments would add uncodified language clarifying that the new office would not gain unnecessary regulatory oversight.

SB 518 establishes an Office on Climate Change required to (1) facilitate the implementation of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's recommendations; (2) ensure state agencies address climate change; (3) perform research and investigations into climate change topics identified by the Commission; (4) assist local government in developing climate change plans; and (5) report to the Governor and General Assembly on State actions to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Counties are on the front line of the effects of climate change, especially sea level rise and saltwater intrusion. As counties continue to combat climate change in a variety of ways, state support can be a valuable asset. Many counties do not have one department dedicated to climate change or sustainability, but those that do report highly of its effectiveness in coordinating larger efforts and providing support to the rest of the local government. The State should provide research and guidance to counties to plan and develop local actions that address the impacts of climate change in a way that best serves their residents.

MACo amendments to the bill would simply make clear that the Office on Climate Change would not implicitly gain regulatory authority to enact mandates on local government. This reinforces the intent of the original bill to create this Office to serve as a resource. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to provide a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** for SB 518.

**MACo amendments:**

On page 3, after line 15, insert:

“SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, notwithstanding any other provision in this Act, this Act shall not be interpreted to grant any new regulatory or oversight authority to either the Maryland Commission on Climate Change or the Office of Climate Change that did not exist prior to its passage. The role of the Office is intended to be advisory and facilitating, and any recommendations for new policy, standards, or requirements – including any affecting local governments or non-governmental stakeholders – would require legislative enactment before having the effect of requiring, regulating, or prohibiting any function or activity.”

On page 3, in line 16, strike “2” and substitute “3”.

**SB518\_LOI\_MDE.pdf**

Uploaded by: abbott, tyler

Position: INFO





February 10, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, Suite 2W  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: Senate Bill 518- Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed Senate Bill 518-*Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment*. The Department would like to provide information on the current bill.

Senate Bill 518 would establish the Office on Climate Change (Office) within the Governor’s Office. The provisions in this bill would be duplicative of work currently being performed by MDE in coordination with the Governor, the Governor’s cabinet agencies, the Chesapeake Bay Subcabinet, and the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC or the Commission). The specific provisions that would be established under this bill are discussed in detail below.

The bill would require the Office to “coordinate with the Commission on Climate Change to ensure the Commission’s recommendations are implemented”. MDE Chairs the MCCC and works in partnership with the Commission and other State Agencies to implement the recommendations that the Commission makes for action by State agencies. It is important to note that some recommendations may need legislative action, which would impact the ability of the executive branch of government to ensure, per the bill language, that those recommendations are implemented. Recently, the MCCC unanimously approved a recommendation for Maryland to adopt ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. The Commission, informed by the latest scientific findings on necessary action by developed nations to limit global temperature increases and by the research and analysis of reduction opportunities by the Commission’s Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Working Group (MWG), recommended a 50% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030. The Department released the executive summary of the forthcoming *2030 GGRA Plan* wherein the Department, along with the other Maryland state agencies, advanced a portfolio of measures that will reduce Maryland’s 2030 GHG emissions to 48.7% below 2006 levels, very nearly achieving the Commission’s recommended 2030 goal.<sup>1</sup> The Department intends to supplement that plan shortly with updated estimates incorporating additional federal policies that will almost certainly bring Maryland’s emissions below the 50% goal, once the incoming federal administration provides more detail on its immediate climate policy actions.

1

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/Documents/2030%20GGRA%20Plan/2030GGRAPlanExSum01272021.pdf>

Secondly, the bill would require the Office to “ensure that each State agency addresses: (i) ways the agency can mitigate the causes of climate and (ii) the impacts of climate change in the agency’s programs, policies, and financial expenditures.” The requirement for State agencies to perform the above provisions already exists in State law under Environmental Article § 2-1305, which among other provisions, requires each State agency to “review its planning, regulatory, and fiscal programs to identify and recommend actions to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland’s greenhouse gas reduction goal and the impacts of climate change.” The Department coordinates with other State Agencies to perform these tasks under the current law.

The bill would also require the Office to “(3) initiate and oversee any additional research or investigations the Office determines are necessary to address factors that the office determines are substantial in fighting climate change but are not included in the Commission on Climate Change’s recommendations.” As mentioned above, in addition to the work that MDE does in coordination with the MCCC, MDE’s Climate Change Program develops Maryland’s long term climate plans under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA). Developing the plans involves comprehensive emissions and economic impact analyses to evaluate the programs and initiatives needed in order to address climate change and meet or exceed the goals in the GGRA. The Climate Change Program also regularly performs additional research and analysis on specific topics.

Next the bill would require the Office to “work with local governments to: (i) develop and implement local climate change plans and (ii) identify resources needed for the implementation of local climate change plans.” Per current Environmental Article § Section 2-1302, one member of the Maryland Association of Counties and one member of the Maryland Municipal League represent local governments on the MCCC. There is currently active coordination between the MCCC, MCCC MWG, MCCC Adaptation and Response Working Group (ARWG) and local governments. As an example, the ARWG works with the Maryland Climate Leadership Academy. The Academy provides training for local government officials and employees on various ways to plan how to adapt to and mitigate the consequences of climate change.

Lastly, the bill would require the Office to “report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding the state’s efforts to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change.” This is duplicative of the current requirement under § Section 2-1304 for the MCCC to submit an annual report to the “Governor and General Assembly, on the status of the State’s efforts to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change, including future plans and recommendations for legislation, if any, to be considered by the General Assembly.”

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 518 during the Committee’s deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott", written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Abbott

cc: George “Tad” Aburn, Director, Air and Radiation Administration

**SB0518 (HB0503) - LOI.pdf**

Uploaded by: Fahrig, Landon

Position: INFO



**TO:** Members, House Economic Matters Committee  
**FROM:** Mary Beth Tung – Director, MEA  
**SUBJECT:** SB0518 (HB0503) - Environment - Office on Climate Change - Establishment  
**DATE:** February 10, 2021

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**MEA Position: Letter of Concern**

Senate Bill 518 converts the Commission on Climate Change from a body with an advisory function to a policymaking body by creating an office within the Executive to implement the recommendations of that body.

Currently, the Maryland Energy Administration, Department of the Environment, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Planning, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Transportation, cooperate closely, utilizing their human resources and the expertise that they provide to develop collaborative approaches for the purpose of lowering greenhouse gas emissions, protecting waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, fostering resilience, and generally mitigating and combatting the effects of climate change. MEA and other State agencies participate, while soliciting and incorporating inputs from legislative, academic, industry and community representatives (among others), with great consideration given to the full spectrum of consequences for each program and policy.

This bill would supplant the efforts and informed opinions of the subject matter experts who serve the people of Maryland. MEA urges the Committee's thoughtful consideration of this information.