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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.

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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.