

TESTIMONY FOR SB 414

Bill Sponsor: Senator Pinsky

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Organization Submitting: Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

Person Submitting: Sam Harvey

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB 414 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive Movement.

Caucus members consistently support legislation that describes the courageousness of taking critically necessary action – including action that will require common sacrifice – in defiance of inertia and paralysis. The Climate Solutions Now Act is the kind of courageous, optimistic, sweeping policy that can encircle and address the monumental issue of climate change.

We have a moral responsibility to our children, grandchildren, and future generations to address climate change. We must, at last, begin to provide responsible stewardship of the planet they will inherit. At a political impasse these past decades, evidence gathered in the scientific community has long since reached critical mass. An overwhelming majority of us can now accept that human activity is driving climate change. And while it does require courage at the beginning of a change, it has more and more become a matter of clear-eyed reason. Without question we all want to safeguard human civilization, preserve its wonders, and encourage its growth toward a more perfect and just society. There are extremely likely outcomes associated with doing nothing about climate change – that course of inaction can never lead to the realization of these objectives.

It's a matter of showing leadership when we consider a piece of legislation like the Climate Solutions Now Act here in Maryland. Every state has its splendors, but here perhaps more so than in other places our fortunes are tied to the natural world - the sea, the rivers, the Chesapeake Bay. Much of our local culture, is defined by that attachment to the tidewater, and our local economies are dependent on it. For those reasons it's appropriate that we should take a lead role here – and then there's the fact that we're more exposed than most to sea level rise.

We've left it until late in the game, and so now we must act with some real ambition. The Climate Solutions Now Act seeks to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent (of 2006 levels) by 2030, and achieve net zero emissions by 2045. This recommended by the community of climate scientists, as a way to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The seas will continue to rise for centuries to come, but by making a start now we can literally start to turn that tide.

This bill sets forth a broad, visionary approach to achieving this goal, through building green government buildings and public schools, supporting community solar, transitioning government fleets to alternative fuels, and planting five million trees (especially in under-served areas). And the Climate Solutions Now Act does it while considering how it will effect everyone caught up in the change. This is the hallmark of thoughtful, comprehensive, legislation.

The Lower Shore Progressive Caucus strongly supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.