



MARYLAND LEAGUE
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

February 11, 2021

Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 583: Climate Solutions Now Act

Dear Chairman Barve, Chairman Davis and Members of the Committees:

Maryland League of Conservation Voters

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Maryland League of Conservation Voters strongly supports HB583 Climate Solutions Now Act and thanks Delegate Stein for his leadership on this Maryland LCV and environmental community priority legislation.

Every year the urgency of the climate crisis grows more pressing, and our window for taking the aggressive actions to mitigate against the worst effects grows shorter. It is no secret that Maryland's more than 3,000 miles of shoreline and more than 265,000 acres of low-lying land make our state one of the most vulnerable to sea level rise and the effects of increasingly violent weather events. As the United States re-enters the Paris Climate Accord, it is critical that Maryland shows leadership in climate policy, to demonstrate to the rest of the country what is possible. In 2020, the Maryland General Assembly was unsuccessful in passing any substantive legislation that would take meaningful steps to addressing this critical concern. It is essential that they do so now.

Other submitted testimony describes the full scope of policies proposed by The Climate Solutions Now Act. We would like to highlight three important initiatives that deserve special attention as we seek to reach the emission reduction mandate of 60% by 2030 and net-zero by 2045.

1. Charging the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities with determining what percent of Maryland's climate funding must be spent in overburdened, underserved communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change emissions;
2. Planting 5 million trees, including 500,000 trees in underserved, urban communities;
3. Purchasing new zero-emission buses as the Maryland fleet turns over. We encourage you to reference our testimony for SB137, which duplicates the provisions outlined in this bill.

These components of the legislation are the most significant equity components of a bill grounded in the understanding that climate justice is environmental justice. Climate change disproportionately impacts many low-wealth communities and communities of color, including impacts to health, local environment, and income. This bill will directly assist these communities in four primary ways:

1. Reduce harmful carbon emissions in order to improve public health;
2. Ensure a portion of state climate funds are spent on environmental justice communities;
3. Help create jobs at all levels;
4. Invest in tree-planting, focusing on underserved urban communities

We strongly urge a favorable report on this essential bill.