



**Committee: Appropriations Budget and Taxation**  
**Testimony on: HB0365 - Public School Construction - Fossil-Fuel Based Energy Systems Costs- Prohibition**  
**Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition**  
**Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair**  
**Position: Favorable**  
**Hearing Date: February 8, 2022**

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB365. The MLC Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on this bill. This bill disallows the use of state matching funds for the installation of fossil-fuel based energy systems (typically gas-fired) in new and existing k-12 schools and is an important element to Maryland's ability to address the climate crisis.

The Maryland Commission on Climate Change has recommended that all buildings in Maryland reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 100% by 2045 and that Maryland as a whole in all sectors of the economy reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 100% by 2045. These recommended goals are embodied in other legislation introduced this session. Overall, buildings are 40% of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions.

**The Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) Predicts Dramatic Increase in Cost of Gas Delivery As Maryland Transitions to Decarbonized Buildings.** The MCCC has projected that gas delivery rates are likely to increase more than two to five times the current rate for consumers left on the gas system, making it all the more important from a cost perspective alone that all Maryland schools transition from fossil fuels. See MCCC [Building Energy Transition Plan](#)

In the long-term, school districts that continue to invest in fossil-fuel energy systems, particularly for new schools and energy efficient modern schools, will be burdened with vastly increased energy operating costs or be faced with the cost of replacing boilers before the end of their lifespans as the cost of gas escalates.

The Interagency Commission on School Construction encourages school districts to set targets to increase renewable energy and to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and, in particular, requires schools to perform analyses of life-cycle costs and evaluations of alternative energy systems before

being allowed to use state funds for installation of fossil fuel systems. However, thus far, in doing those analyses, schools have not factored in the predicted dramatic cost increases for gas delivery systems and thus have not adequately accounted for the escalating costs of gas. We note that there are several net-zero ready schools (i.e. schools that are designed to be ready for the installation of photovoltaic systems in order to become net-zero) in the design process or under construction on the Eastern Shore, an area that lacks a gas infrastructure. Thus in an area already facing high fossil-fuel costs (oil and propane), school districts are choosing to build schools designed to be energy efficient and solar ready.

Importantly, transitioning schools to renewable energy systems (air and ground source heat pumps and solar) and to be energy efficient is critical to Maryland and Montgomery County reaching our climate goals. Maryland's 1400 existing schools are overwhelmingly powered by gas-fired boilers. These schools and the planned new schools must be part of the solution.

For these reasons, we request a FAVORABLE report for HB365.

#### **MLC Climate Justice Wing:**

Assateague Coastal Trust  
Maryland Legislative Coalition  
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
WISE  
Frack Free Frostburg  
Mountain Maryland Movement  
Clean Water Action  
Howard County Indivisible  
Howard County Sierra Club  
Columbia Association Climate change and sustainability advisory committee  
HoCo Climate Action  
CHEER  
Climate XChange - Maryland  
Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/  
National Parks Conservation Association  
350 Montgomery County  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for

Climate Solutions  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee  
Audubon Naturalist Society  
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
Environmental Justice Ministry  
Coalition For Smarter Growth  
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County  
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign  
MoCo DCC  
Potomac Conservancy  
Casa de Maryland  
Nuclear Information & Resource Service  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
Laurel Resist  
Greenbelt Climate Action Network  
Maryland League of Conservation Voters  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos  
Wicomico NAACP

Chesapeake Physicians for Social  
Responsibility  
Chispa MD  
Climate Law & Policy Project  
Maryland Poor Peoples Campaign  
Labor for Sustainability  
The Nature Conservancy  
Clean Air Prince Georges  
350 Baltimore  
Maryland Environmental Health Network  
Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis  
Talbot Rising  
Adat Shalom Climate Action  
Mid-Atlantic Earth Holders  
Climate Parents of Prince Georges  
Echotopia  
Maryland NAACP State Conference,  
Environmental Justice Committee