



**LEGISLATIVE POSITION:
UNFAVORABLE
House Bill 708
Comprehensive Climate Solutions
House Economic Matters Committee**

Friday, March 4, 2022

Dear Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 5,500 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

HB 708 is an extensive and dense piece of legislation proposing major changes to Maryland's policies relating to the emission of greenhouse gas. Despite the many different and worrisome proposals, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce has a few primary concerns with HB 708 as introduced:

1. Maryland's existing climate plans are required to achieve a greenhouse gas reduction target while simultaneously increasing jobs and economic benefits. The current plan meets that standard and is therefore a win-win for Maryland. HB 708 changes the current standard by modifying the net benefit test to compare proposals to "no-action" by the rest of the world. By comparing jobs and economic impacts to a global climate catastrophe than any measure, no matter how draconian, will be a positive.

HB 708 essentially eliminates the requirement that the plan result in a net economic benefit to the State's economy and a net increase in jobs.

2. The GHG reduction goals outlined in HB 708 are more stringent than those recommended by the Biden Administration or international organizations such as the United Nations. The net-zero goals by 2050, which have been widely accepted, has been used by the private sector in sustainability plans almost exclusively. HB 708 does no more than move the goal post on targets that have been the basis of GHG reduction plans across the State.

HB 708 creates significant challenges for existing businesses and future economic development in Maryland. This legislation effectively removes the consideration of economic impact from the State's GHG reduction plans. Finally, it places Maryland at a significant regional competitive disadvantage. HB 708 ultimately phases out the use of other affordable energy sources that are critical to every jurisdiction in our State.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **unfavorable report** on HB 708.

