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## **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS: HB708 - Comprehensive Climate Solutions**

Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV strongly supports HB708 - Comprehensive Climate Solutions - and we thank Chairman Barve for his leadership on this issue. We are grateful for the robust, ambitious policies to make substantive reductions to our state greenhouse gas emissions that are in front of the Maryland General Assembly this session.

This legislation is a priority of Maryland LCV as well as the environmental community in Maryland. It is also, along with companion bills HB806 and HB831 being considered by other committees, legislation that is being singled out by National LCV as a top priority nationally for its far-reaching, forward thinking policies. Through the passage of this suite of bills, Maryland looks to be, once again, the national leader on climate policy. The eyes of the nation are on us.

HB 708 provides critical elements that will help Maryland achieve necessary greenhouse gas emissions reductions including, creating a commitment to reduce emissions 60% by 2032 and to be net-zero emissions by 2045. We support the amendments put forth by Maryland Climate Partners to clarify and strengthen this bill.

HB 708 incorporates some key elements to address environmental injustice related to climate change. We support these provisions as well as the creation of the Just Transition Employment and Retraining Working Group, Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub, and Climate Justice Corps.

For the Climate Justice Corps Program, we encourage the House to adopt the worker rights, pay, and benefit proposed for the Maryland Corps by HB443 as well as amendments that advance organizing rights and hiring prioritization for youth, low-income, and other historically marginalized groups.

There has been tremendous effort to agree and align on legislative language and metrics defining several terms pertaining to environmental justice initiatives. HB 708 - Comprehensive Climate Solutions - should include the following definitions as they pertain to environmental justice initiatives:

- **“Environmental Justice Community”** shall be defined as communities that are both underserved and overburdened.

- **“Environmental Justice”** shall be defined as equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people, regardless of race, income, culture, and social status.
- **“Disparate Impact”** shall be defined as a facially neutral policy or practice that disproportionately affects members of a group identified by race, color, or national origin, where the recipient’s policy or practice lacks a substantial legitimate justification and where there exist one or more alternatives that would serve the same legitimate objectives but with less disproportionate effect on the basis of race, color, or national origin.
- **“Disproportionate Burden”** shall be defined as a facially neutral policy or practice that disproportionately affects low-income populations more than non-low-income populations and on a finding of disproportionate burden, requires the recipient to evaluate alternatives and mitigate burdens where practicable.
- **“Low-Income”** shall be defined as a resident in a household that is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.
- **“Underserved Community”** shall be defined as, at a minimum, an underserved community includes any census tract, as determined in accordance with the most recent united state census, in which:
  - At least 25 percent of the residents qualify as low-income; or
  - At least 50 percent of the residents identify as non-white, or
  - At least 20 percent of the residents have limited English proficiency
- **“Overburdened Community”** shall be defined as “at a minimum, an overburdened community is a community that includes any census tract for which three or more of the below indicators are above the 75% percentile statewide:
  - 1) PM 2.5
  - 2) Ozone
  - 3) NATA diesel PM
  - 4) NATA cancer risk
  - 5) NATA respiratory hazard index
  - 6) Traffic proximity
  - 7) Lead paint indicator
  - 8) Superfund proximity (npl sites)
  - 9) Risk management plan facilities proximity
  - 10) Hazardous waste proximity
  - 11) Wastewater discharge indicator
  - 12) Proximity to a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
  - 13) Percent broadband coverage
  - 14) Asthma emergency room discharges
  - 15) Myocardial infarction discharges
  - 16) Low birth-weight infants
  - 17) Proximity to power plants
  - 18) Proximity to a TRI facility
  - 19) Proximity to a brownfield
  - 20) Proximity to mining operations
  - 21) Proximity to a hazardous waste landfill
  - 22) Proximity to an unincorporated community

We also support the addition of a Climate Catalytic Capital Fund, as in SB 528. Within that fund, we urge a funding amount that is sufficient to make a substantive contribution to the programs funded by the statewide green banks. Additionally, in this article, we ask that other statewide green banks be eligible for receiving these funds, especially as they support funding projects that serve low and moderate income communities. Most importantly, we strongly urge that this program follow the provisions of Justice 40 and require 40% of the Climate Catalytic Capital Fund investments be directed to overburdened communities.

We are grateful for the leadership and vision presented by Chairman Barve in this legislation. We respectfully offer and strongly advocate for the inclusion of these clarifying and strengthening amendments and Maryland LCV strongly urges a favorable report on this important bill.