

# marylandclimatepartners

**HB0708 - Comprehensive Climate Solutions Act**

**Date: March 4, 2022**

**Committee: House Economic Matter Committee**

**Position: Favorable with amendments**

The undersigned organizations express their strong support for **HB0708 - Comprehensive Climate Solutions Act** and thank the sponsor, Chairman Barve, for introducing this important piece of legislation. We support this bill and offer several amendments that strengthen the legislation (attached).

The Comprehensive Climate Solutions Act is a crucial piece of legislation that sets ambitious but achievable climate goals and addresses environmental justice and climate equity. The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in August of 2021, has declared a “code red for humanity” due to rapidly worsening climate change. To avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change, we must commit to reaching net-zero emissions by mid-century. HB708 commits Maryland to a goal of net-zero emissions by 2045, with an interim goal of 60% reductions of greenhouse gas emissions by 2032. We support this improvement of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act but ask the committee to consider amending the date to 2030 to match the recommendation from climate scientists and the Senate proposal. We also support the creation of the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub to support the work to achieve these greenhouse gas emissions reductions. We offer amendments to move this hub from the Maryland Energy Administration and place it under the purview of the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) because we believe the goals of MCEC will better align with the purpose of the hub.

Historically, low-income communities and people of color have borne disproportionate negative impacts from dirty energy use and climate change. We strongly support the provisions that direct the Maryland Department of the Environment to conduct research and data gathering on cumulative impacts and overburdened communities, in consultation with the Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities. It is important that these duties are properly staffed and lead to the establishment of strategies to address environmental justice and advance climate equity, including goals for funding directed to disproportionately affected communities. We offer minor amendments to improve this provision.

We also support the creation of the Climate Justice Corps to support projects to reduce GHG emissions in overburdened communities and invest in a “green-collar” workforce. We urge the sponsor to work with colleagues to collaborate with programs such as the Maryland Corps Program and the proposed Maryland Civilian Climate Corps (proposed in SB228) to ensure that the jobs created to promote climate justice and clean energy projects are well paid and benefitted.

Another important piece of climate justice is ensuring that we invest in a just transition to clean energy and we do not leave our workforce behind. We strongly support the creation of the Just

Transition Employment and Retraining Working Group to make policy recommendations for how to best serve fossil fuel workers in Maryland.

Finally, we commend the bill sponsor for including provisions to extend the EmPOWER Maryland program and increase the annual efficiency gains. This program is a critical tool in mitigating the energy burden our most vulnerable residents face. We are particularly supportive of provisions that better align EmPOWER Maryland with our climate goals and energy needs. We offer amendments to this section to better serve this goal.

With 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline, Maryland is one of the [most climate-vulnerable states in America](#) – just from sea-level rise. We must act boldly and urgently to address climate change. We must update our climate commitments and enact a plan to reach them.

Thank you for your consideration of HB0708, Comprehensive Climate Solutions Act. For all the reasons stated above, we urge a favorable vote from the committee with the inclusion of these amendments.

#### **Endorsing organization**

350MoCo	Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA)
Audubon Mid-Atlantic	League of Women Voters Maryland
Audubon Naturalist Society	Maryland Campaign for Environmental
Audubon Society of Central MD	Human Rights
Blue Water Baltimore	Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home
Cedar Lane Church Environmental Team	Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry	Maryland Legislative Coalition
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Maryland Sierra Club
Chesapeake Climate Action Network	MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition
CCAN Action Fund	Maxedoutsolar
Chesapeake Physicians for Social	MLC Climate Justice Wing
Responsibility	National Aquarium
Climate Law & Policy Project	Rock Creek Conservancy
Climate Reality Montgomery County	ShoreRivers
Climate Reality Project Baltimore	Strong Future Maryland
Climate XChange Maryland	Sunrise Movement Baltimore
Coalition for Smarter Growth	Sunrise Movement Howard County
Creation Care Ministry of the DE-MD Synod	Sunrise Movement Maryland
Downtown Residents Advocacy Network	Takoma Park Mobilization Environment
(Baltimore)	Committee
Elders Climate Action Maryland	Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of
Environment Maryland	Maryland
Greenbelt Climate Action Network	Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Howard County Climate Action	WISE
Indivisible Howard County	

Proposed Amendments  
*Climate Partners Coalition*

**Greenhouse gas reduction goals:**

- Page 7, line 5-6 - Overall GHG Goal - 60% by 2032
  - Amendment - 60% by 2030 to line up with Senate (for consistency)

**Climate Catalytic Capital Fund**

- SB528 creates the Climate Catalytic Capital Fund to promote environmental justice and to leverage increased private capital investment in technology development and deployment. This should be added to HB708 to support the work introduced in the bill.
- Amendment: Add language from SB528 starting on page 5, line 12 until page 7 line 27.
  - Note: amendments to this section of the bill include that the Fund may not be used for a project to install new equipment that uses fossil fuels or upgrades the efficiency of existing equipment that uses fossil fuels
  - The Climate Catalytic Capital Fund should have a requirement that at least 40% of funding for greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures go to communities that are “overburdened” (as defined below) **AND AT LEAST 25% OF THE RESIDENTS QUALIFY AS LOW-INCOME**

**Environmental Justice:**

- Pages 4-6, goals for funding and targeted benefits to “disproportionately affected communities”
  - Amendment - replace “disproportionately affected communities” with “overburdened communities” with the following definition to align with other legislative initiatives and be more specific about impact. Add a requirement that 40% of funding for greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures go to “overburdened communities.”
  - **“OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY” IS DEFINED AS “AT A MINIMUM, AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY, IS A COMMUNITY THAT INCLUDES ANY CENSUS TRACT FOR WHICH 3 OR MORE OF THE BELOW INDICATORS ARE ABOVE THE 75TH 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. % 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

AND AT LEAST 25% OF THE RESIDENTS QUALIFY AS LOW-INCOME, OR THE AREA IS DESIGNATED AS AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY BY THE SECRETARY [of MDE]

Petition language for MDE to designate a community as “overburdened”: “IN ORDER TO DESIGNATE AN AREA AS AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PETITION PROCESS, THE SECRETARY MUST MAKE FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO WHETHER THE AREA MEETS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- (A) THE ANNUAL MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF THAT AREA EXCEEDS 125 PERCENT OF THE STATEWIDE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME;
- (B) A MAJORITY OF PERSONS AGE 25 AND OLDER IN THAT AREA HAVE A COLLEGE EDUCATION;
- (C) THE NEIGHBORHOOD DOES NOT BEAR AN UNFAIR BURDEN OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION; AND (D) THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS MORE THAN LIMITED ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACES AND WATER RESOURCES, PLAYGROUNDS, AND OTHER CONSTRUCTED OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND VENUES. IF ALL OF THE CRITERIA ARE MET, THE SECRETARY MAY NOT DESIGNATE THE AREA AS AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY.”

### **Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub**

- We have concerns about housing the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub in the Maryland Energy Administration due to the Administration’s input on the MCCC report and

recommendations. We would like to move the administration of the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub to the Maryland Clean Energy Center.

#### **Landfills:**

- **Pg 6, line 5-23** Amend the deadline for adoption of regulations January 2023 or June 2023.
- Consider appropriations to MDE's air department to support the landfill methane work

#### **Just Transition Employment Working Group**

- Membership of the working group, on pg. 12, lines 10 strike “one representative of the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra club, selected by the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club” and replace with “Two representatives of the environmental community”
- On page 14, line 11, strike “counter” and substitute “address”.
- Fenceline communities should be defined (page 14, line 20)

#### **Climate Justice Corps**

- Page 20 - align the compensation of Climate Justice Corps participants with other civilian corps to ensure they are paid positions. This will also bring consistency with SB528.
  - Amendment: On page 20, in line 24, strike “A” and substitute “(1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A”; in lines 25 and 26, strike “(1)” and “(2)”, respectively, and substitute “(I)” and “(II)”, respectively; and after line 28, insert: “(2) STIPENDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND WRAP-AROUND SERVICES SHALL BE PROVIDED TO STIPEND VOLUNTEERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 24, SUBTITLE 11 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE.”

#### **EmPOWER:**

- Page 25, line 14 - broaden empower to focus on GHG reduction as well as.
  - Amendment: On page 25, line 15, after “programs” add “**AND GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) ABATEMENT PROGRAMS**”. On line 16, after “savings” add “**AND EQUIVALENT GHG ABATEMENT**”
- Page 25 line 36 - align dates for EmPOWER targets with SB528.
  - Amend to
    - 2.25% PER YEAR IN 2024 AND 2025;
    - 2.5% IN 2026;
    - 2.75% PER YEAR IN 2027 AND THEREAFTER.