



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342  
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

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TO: Delegate C. T. Wilson, Chair  
Delegate Brian M. Crosby, Vice Chair  
Economic Matters Committee Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)  
DATE: March 8, 2022  
RE: HB0171 Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act

### **The MLLC supports HB0171 Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0171.

The climate crisis disproportionately impacts Latinos and low-income families who face the detrimental health effects on a daily basis. A recent report by the CDC highlights that Latinos are more likely to live in areas where air pollution fails to meet national standards.<sup>1</sup> When pollution released into our air by vehicles, power plants, and other industrial sources, chemically reacts with sunlight it creates ground level ozone. Presenting health risks for communities exposed to them. Ozone is a colorless gas found in our air that, at ground level, is the primary component of smog and is the most threatening pollutant to human health. When ground-level ozone is found at high levels, it can diminish lung function, inflame airways, and aggravate asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Latinos are highly exposed to ground-level ozone and its harmful effects. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), close to 50 percent of all Hispanic Americans live in counties that frequently violate ground level ozone standards.<sup>2</sup>

HB0171 creates the Climate Crisis Initiative in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next 9 years and reach net-negative emissions by 2040. The bill establishes pollution fees on all natural gas that local distribution companies distribute for combustion in the state. The revenue from fees will be used to fund the Household and Employer Benefit Fund and the Climate Crisis Infrastructure Fund. The purpose of the benefit fund is to provide protection for low and moderate income households; and to protect energy-intensive, trade-exposed employers in the state. The purpose of the infrastructure fund is to invest in initiatives that improve the health and welfare of the citizens of the state by:

Expanding the use of clean energy sources and energy efficiency in the electricity and other energy-consuming sectors. Creating a cleaner, more just, and more efficient transportation sector throughout the state. Providing funding for resilience against climate change and weather events that have an impact on the lives of the citizens of the state and its economy.

For these reasons the MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB0171.