



Policy Foundation of Maryland

Committee: Economic Matters - Environment & Transportation

Testimony on: HB0171-- Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (CCEJ)

SPONSOR: Del. David Fraser-Hildago

Organization: Policy Foundation of Maryland, Rebuild Maryland Coalition

Person Submitting: Sarahia Benn (Executive Dir.)

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 10, 2022

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing testimony today in support of HB0171. Policy Foundation of Maryland is a grassroots organization focused on State and County level legislation and policies that impacts Black, Brown, marginalized, low income communities and veterans affairs. Environmental and transportation legislation is of massive importance to these communities particularly due to how impacted these communities have been historically and currently. Rebuild Maryland Coalition consists of more than 41 diverse organizations and businesses who advocate and lobby strongly for environmental legislation that impact Marylanders particularly multiply marginalized Marylanders.

Why is CCEJ IMPORTANT?:

- Reduces harm & protects Marginalized, most vulnerable, and low income Marylanders
- Embrace the green economy
- Transition away from fossil fuel jobs to high paying green energy jobs
- CCEJ will place a fee on all imported fossil fuels.
- The fossil fuel fee on fossil fuels shall be collected at the first point of sale and by the entity transporting the fossil fuel into the state.

- Generate millions of dollars for investment in clean energy infrastructure
- Allow local jurisdictions to invest up to approximately \$500,000 dollars in a climate plan

Objectives of the CCEJ:

- Reduce emissions 60% from 2006 levels by 2030;
- Reduce emissions 100% from 2006 levels by 2040; and
- Achieve negative emissions after 2040.
- Two funds will be created with the revenue generated from the pollution fees:: Household & Employer Benefit Fund And Climate Crisis Infrastructure fund
- CCEJ requires the Department of the Environment to establish a Climate Crisis Council to develop a plan to achieve emissions reductions targets.
- Climate Crisis Council will establishes the Fee and Investment Initiative that will help fund actions to reduce emissions, enhance resilience to climate impacts, and ensure an equitable transition for workers and communities that depend on fossil fuels

Low income neighborhoods have experienced the negative impacts of pollution over centuries due to industrialization and other factors in the environment. [Pollution](#) and the effects of pollution in studies about [emissions, poor air quality](#), lead poisoning, and other environmental crises impact children’s educational outcomes. Any type of exposure to pollutants in schools or the general environment can negatively impact on mental state, test scores, their ability to focus, and/or consistently attend school.

Locally just a few years ago Harford County was proposing to build a tire pyrolysis recycling factory to be located within 5 miles of 6 schools in Black, Brown, and marginalized communities and schools. It was defeated through grassroots advocacy but imagine if there had been CCEJ in place the fight would not have been so overwhelming and costly to local activists who are normally under-resourced and undermanned.

The major benefit of CCEJ is that these generational issues that have long gone unaddressed can now receive help through the CCEJ Climate Crisis Benefit Fund & Infrastructure Fund to address the harm to the marginalized communities and the communities schools.

Air pollution from burning fossil fuels is causing massive health impacts in marginalized communities such as cancer, environmental asthma, lung disease, and heart disease. There are hotspots clearly located all over Maryland that have high incidences of these health impacts based on excessive air pollution. CCEJ would address the inequity in addressing Communities of color, low income and moderate communities that are disproportionately negatively impacted by such environmental attacks through air pollution and other environmental crises.

Finally, CCEJ will provide funding to low and moderate income families as well as local governments to create and implement climate action plans to reduce GHG emissions. This bill economically as well as environmentally addresses a significant portion of Maryland's climate problem. It also begins to address the many centuries of climate crisis inequity in Marginalized communities.

For these reasons and more, we urge a **FAVORABLE REPORT** on HB017.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarahia Benn
(Policy Foundation of Maryland, Rebuild Maryland Coalition)

(Dedicated to Women's History month)

“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.” - [Angela Davis](#)

”You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.” - [Shirley Chisolm](#)