



SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY

Submitted by Dr. Brad Phillips, Executive Director
February 15, 2022

SB 528 – Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022

POSITION: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), which represents Maryland's sixteen (16) community colleges, supports Senate Bill 528. The goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions will require substantial and sustained commitment. New and renovated physical infrastructure must be accompanied by a skilled workforce capable of maintaining this infrastructure.

Maryland's community colleges are constantly reviewing opportunities for expanding postsecondary education to include emerging technologies and training. As our colleges conduct impact studies and environmental scans around industry and workforce needs, the skills necessary to achieve these types of efficiencies in our State are lacking.

Achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions will require investing in workforce that can address the skills needed to meet the demands of the evolving industries. As the largest providers of workforce training, community colleges would like to take this moment to point out that major policy shifts in our energy grid and restructuring a large section of our economy will require massive investments in employee training. There are few training programs on repairing zero-emissions technologies and the industry is already struggling with ways to repair electric vehicles.. The same scenario is true around battery technology, carbon capture, and modern building performance technology. Community colleges are concerned that without adequate investment in Maryland's workforce skills, the costs for effectuating the goals of The Climate Solutions Now Act will increase dramatically.

Our institutions are also concerned about the costs and potential delays to our facilities if the infrastructure does not keep pace with the requirements that will now be in law. Investment in physical infrastructure must be accompanied by an enhanced electrical grid. Each investment in buildings and infrastructure must be accompanied by investment in our state's workforce capabilities. Maryland's community colleges are committed to developing the human capital required to implement and sustain the goals of this legislation.

Without investing in our workforce and our energy infrastructure, we are concerned that the mandates in this legislation will stall our state's full economic potential. As you consider this legislation, we are supportive of the goals and request you consider these two aspects of the legislation so community colleges can be prepared to meet the changes in the workforce.