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BILL NO.: Senate Bill 528

TITLE: Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022

SPONSOR: Senator Pinsky

COMMITTEE: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMEDMENTS**

DATE: February 15, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** Senate Bill 528 – Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. This legislation would provide a comprehensive path forward for Maryland as leaders look to reduce greenhouse gas emission and ensure a sustainable future.

Baltimore County is committed to tackling the real and significant challenge of climate change. Under the leadership of County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Baltimore County is working to meet 100% of County government’s energy demand with renewable energy sources, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and taking the other necessary steps on the local level to operate a green government. Therefore, we support the efforts by this legislation to assist local governments in this pursuit and scale up through the state some of the efforts the County has undertaken.

Specifically, Baltimore County supports provisions which would transition school buses and State fleet vehicles to electric models and to direct State funding toward high efficiency buildings and schools. The County also strongly supports measures in this bill that would identify communities that are being disproportionately impacted by climate change and direct dedicated funding toward solutions for these communities.

In supporting this bill, we recognize that there are some provisions that may unintentionally impede Baltimore County’s sustainability goals. SB 528 would require aerial monitoring of methane emissions from municipal landfills and subsequent remedial activity if those measurements reach a certain threshold. The County’s solid waste engineers have expressed concerns that this type of monitoring will not be able to effectively differentiate between methane from landfills and other nearby facilities that also emit methane near our landfills. Baltimore County is also concerned that adoption of California’s landfill emission standards may require the addition of costly methane monitoring systems at one or both of our closed landfills, potentially disrupting the large-scale solar installations planned at both sites. Clarification of both sections may prove extremely valuable to local jurisdictions.

Baltimore County also requests clarification on the required emissions standards for covered buildings that are owned by the State. It is unclear to County Government whether buildings owned by local governments or institutional buildings, other than public schools, are also subject to these emissions standards. The Division of Property Management advises that 38 different County-owned buildings may be subject to these provisions, and compliance would likely require significant reallocations of funds to retrofit these existing buildings. Baltimore County is eager to work the sponsor and the committee to clarify these concerns.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 528. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.