



TESTIMONY FOR SB0528 CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW ACT

Bill Sponsor: Senator Pinsky

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0528 with amendments on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. I am speaking for the more than 30,000 citizen lobbyists in our Coalition.

We love this bill. It is a bold, comprehensive attack on the climate crisis and a recognition that we must have a multi-pronged approach if we are to ever get to net zero emissions. We are impressed with all the sectors of greenhouse gases that it targets - the reduction of emissions in transportation with the zero-energy buses and state fleets; the focus on building all electric buildings and reducing emissions in existing buildings; and the support of solar tax incentives that will help 'green' our grid. We love the aggressiveness of the new greenhouse gas reduction targets, and the change in methane accounting. However, we are especially impressed with the provisions that deal specifically with climate justice because we feel that you must lead with equity and take care of the people who will be most disadvantaged by the transition that we must make to have a cleaner future.

There is much to like in this bill. We love the idea that we should not be digging a deeper hole by continuing to support fossil fuel infrastructure in buildings. We agree that we should not be building a greater reliance on fossil fuels. The only weakness that we see in the legislation centers around the building of net zero schools. The bill calls for building only one net zero school in each district between 2023 and 2033.

With the Built to Learn Act funding available, we are about to make the biggest investment in schools that we have made in decades. Building, or upgrading schools, with fossil fuel technology is a poor investment, given that the Maryland Commission on Climate Change has estimated that gas prices will be 2 to 5 times higher than current levels within ten years. Additionally, over the next ten years, fossil fuel infrastructure will be harder to maintain and replace. Schools do not get a lot of money for renovation, so what we are building today will be what we see in 30 years. We can't afford that. Building anything but net zero, or net zero ready schools is an expensive waste of taxpayer dollars and a mistake in terms of reaching our greenhouse gas emissions targets.

We understand that funding is always a concern, and we think that the Net Zero School Grant fund that will be put in place to help schools meet the requirement to build at least one net zero school in each school district, is a great idea. But if we only build one net zero school in each district, we are still digging

a pretty big hole. Especially since the net zero schools that we have built recently were similar in cost, or less costly, than building schools with fossil fuel infrastructure. So, although the idea of building one net zero school is better than building none, but we are hoping that the legislature will see that making an investment in building *all* net zero schools, or net zero ready schools, is really the better financial option.

Maryland needs to do this. We have been held hostage by fossil fuel companies for way too long, and it is time that we made an effort to give our children a cleaner, greener future.

As members of the Climate Partners, we support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report in committee. Suggested amendments are listed below.

Amendments coordinated by the Maryland Climate Partners

Priority Amendments

The goal is to update the definition of Schools and High-Performance Buildings and also make the net zero-ready requirements stronger.

1. This adds energy efficiency provisions for buildings.
2. Insert ALL of this language on Page 35, following line 9, numbered as follows:
 - D. For new covered buildings funded at least 25% by State funds
 - A 40% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code for permit applications received between Jan 1 2023 and Dec 31 2025
 - A 60% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code for permit applications received between Jan 1 2025 and Dec 31 2027
 - E. For all other new covered buildings
 - A 40% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code for permit applications received between Jan 1 2025 and Dec 31 2027
 - A 60% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code for permit applications received
 - F. “Major Renovation” means a renovation project:
 - For which the total projected cost exceeds 50% of the assessed value of the existing building; or
 - Involving a change of use, if the change involves the application of different requirements of the standards.
 - G. Except as provided in subsection () of this section, if a covered building is undergoing a major renovation, the building shall be renovated to achieve:
 - A 40% reduction in the building’s average annual energy use; or
 - A 20% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the current Energy Code.
 - H. A local jurisdiction may waive the requirements under subsection () of this section if the building owner demonstrates that the cost of the improvements necessary to achieve the required energy reductions would exceed projected operational and energy savings from the improvements over a certain payback period:
 - A 25–year period for all buildings funded at least 25% by the State.
 - A 15–year period for all other buildings.
3. This applies solar ready requirements.

Explicitly state that the IAC state school construction funding process may cover planning, design, and engineering for net-zero schools.

School buildings that are not net-zero should be net-zero ready (potential amendment language below)

Insert on Page 35, following line 6
(12-501(3)(l)(2)(A (under the provision requiring solar ready):

 - A. The Installation of Solar Energy Systems

- To include a 40% roof set aside and necessary electrical panel and conduit requirements. if the building;
 - Will have 20,000 square feet or more of continuous roof space, excluding the parking area; and
 - Will be 20 stories or less in height, above grade plane.
- B. Regulations adopted under this subsection may authorize a local jurisdiction to waive the solar-ready requirement for a building on a specific finding that:
- incident solar radiation at the building site is less than 75% of incident solar radiation at an open site; or
 - shadow studies indicate that 25% of a building's roof area will be in shadow.

Also clarify the definition of "Solar Ready" to include the 40% roof set aside and the necessary electrical panel and conduit requirements.

4. Regarding the NZ School Pilot

Delete "subject to the availability of funding" on Page 8 Line 14 and replace that language with one of the options below -

P. 8, line 9-13, (5-312(c)(2)(I), Delete para. "Except as Provided in . .

Delete 5-312 (c) (2) (I) of the Education Article that was inserted: except as provided in subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, the net-zero energy requirements that apply for a building to meet the definition of a "high performance building" under § 3-602.1 12 of the state finance and procurement article

OR

Amend to read: Except as provided in Subparagraph III of this Paragraph, Public Schools shall be required to achieve a 40% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code by 2023 and a 60% reduction in modeled energy use consumption over the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code by 2025.