



**HoCoClimateAction.org**  
Howard County, Maryland

**Testimony on HB880  
Environment – Impact of Actions on Climate, Labor, and Environmental Justice  
("Maryland Climate Equity Act")**

**Hearing Date: March 2, 2022**

**Bill Sponsor: Delegate Delegate Regina T. Boyce**

**Committee: House Environment and Transportation and Economics Matters Committees**

**Submitting: Ruth White for Howard County Climate Action**

**Position: Favorable**

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers.

On behalf of Howard County Climate Action, I urge a favorable report from the committee on HB880 - Environment – Impact of Actions on Climate, Labor, and Environmental Justice.

Maryland's public agencies make decisions that impact residents and communities, but in the past have not formally considered how their decisions impact the climate crisis, or had disproportionate negative impacts on the health and well-being of low-income communities and communities of black, indigenous, people of color, and non-English speaking. In fact we have seen multiple negative impacts in these communities.

Last year this body passed SB83/HB298 - Consideration of Climate and Labor which requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider climate and labor in its decision. Several years ago, I personally attended a public meeting in Brandywine, an area well known for excessive polluting industries (see [Grist article here.](#)) At this meeting, PSC employees told community members that the law and process at the time did not permit the PSC to consider the impacts of their decisions on the health of the people in the community, with regard to air quality or any other measure. And that climate impacts there could be offset by planting trees in Western Maryland.

The PSC has shifted its approach since SB83/HB298 passed in 2021, but many other state agencies make decisions on air and water quality, transportation, siting of pipelines, polluting fuel infrastructure and other harmful facilities. This law will help agencies avoid the compounding of past unjust outcomes by providing definitions of underserved and overburdened communities (i.e. environmental justice communities) to guide their decision making processes. Our most vulnerable communities should not continue to be disproportionately negatively impacted.

HB880 also requires certain considerations for workers.

Thank you for your consideration of HB880. For all the reasons stated above, Howard County Climate Action urges a favorable vote from the committee.

Submitted by Ruth White, Steering and Advocacy Committee  
Howard County Climate Action

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Grist article -

<https://grist.org/justice/in-maryland-one-community-is-taking-a-stand-against-environmental-racism/>