



**LEGISLATIVE POSITION:**

**Unfavorable**

**House Bill 695**

**Environment – Climate Crisis Plan - Requirement**

**House Environment and Transportation Committee**

**Friday, February 18, 2022**

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 5,500 members and federated partners working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic recovery and growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

HB 695 requires each county to prepare a climate crisis plan and to submit that plan to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for review and feedback on or before June 1, 2023. Each county would be required to finalize their plan on or before January 1, 2024, and then review and update their plan once every 3 years

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce is concerned with the variability in the county-by-county plans that would result from HB 695. Maryland businesses struggle to contend with the differing laws and regulations that currently exist across Maryland's 24 political subdivisions. Regarding the issue of climate change, it is common practice for businesses to develop one greenhouse gas reduction or sustainability plan to implement across their locations with an eye to the State's objectives and timelines. HB 695 would potentially add 24 different sets of regulations, likely stricter than State requirements, with varying degrees of implementation timelines on top of what they are already complying with.

With so much focus and debate during the 2022 legislative session on a new statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce would urge the committee to not consider layering 24 different local requirements on top of what could be new and aggressive statewide goals.

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **unfavorable report** on **HB 695**.