



Date 2/16/22 Hearing date 2/18/2022
BILL: HB695 - Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation
SPONSOR: Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo

Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Distinguished Members of the Committee,

Last fall, when Climate XChange Maryland worked with sponsors to design the Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (HB171), we studied what kinds of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Hazard Plans each jurisdiction in Maryland has, and performed an informal needs assessment asking, 2 Sustainability Directors, 2 Environmental Health Directors, 1 Environmental Policy Director, 1 Acting Environmental Health Director, 1 Director of Public Works, 1 Director of Governmental & Community Relations, 1 Energy Lead in Sustainability Office, 1 Chief of the Energy, Climate, Compliance, 1 Environmental Health Specialist, 1 Resource Plans Reviewer, 1 Emergency Planner, 1 Agricultural Land Preservation, Program Administrator what their most pressing environmental and economic needs are.

In order of most pressing needs came this list. (1) Flooding, Storm-water Issues (2) Failing Septic Systems (3) Nature Remediation for Erosion, Heat Islands (4) Environmental Justice (5) Waste Emissions (6) Education about the Climate Crisis. (7) Support for Alternative Energy Options (Solar) (8) Transportation Infrastructure (9) Energy Efficiency for Affordable Housing.

HB695 creates an important structure to address these documented needs. It gives our state and its local jurisdictions a framework to start the process to analyze and implement the reduction of greenhouse gases necessary to slow down the effects of our changing climate. We must approach our emissions reduction plans thoroughly and methodically. That starts with conducting a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory of existing conditions in the county and establishing realistic county targets. HB695 importantly includes developing a plan for identifying the communities and infrastructure within the county that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

HB695 prioritizes actions that will have the most meaningful impact on addressing the effects of climate change in the county; holds at least two public hearings; and provide an opportunity for public comment. As one county Representative suggested, “Let’s create a cross department, integrated team, that includes community members to review proposals from trusted Community Based Organization and avoid a county procurement process.”

For these reasons and more, we urge a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB695

Respectfully submitted,
Climate XChange Maryland and the Rebuild Maryland Coalition

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Cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation