



Wednesday, March 2, 2022

The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair
The Honorable Dana Stein, Vice Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB 880 – Environment - Impact of Actions on Climate, Labor, and Environmental Justice
Position – Favorable

Thank you Chair Barve and Vice Chair Stein and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 880, the Maryland Climate Equity Act of 2022.

My name is Victoria Leonard, Political and Legislative Director for the Baltimore-Washington Laborers' District Council (BWLDC), an affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America, or LiUNA for short. The BWLDC represents more than 7,500 members across Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Our members are proudly employed on many infrastructure construction projects across the region, and about one-third of our members are Maryland residents.

LiUNA supports HB 880 and its requirement that state agencies consider the impact of their decisions on Maryland residents' climate, health and jobs. We especially appreciate that HB 880 includes a provision to assess whether a proposed project's employers, contractors, and subcontractors pay prevailing wages, offer health care and retirement benefits, participate in registered apprenticeship programs, and have a plan to recruit, train, and employ state residents on the project.

Labor standards are very important. It is the best way to ensure projects approved by the state of Maryland create quality jobs with benefits that are filled by Maryland residents. In particular, prevailing wage laws are very important because they ensure that construction workers earn a fair day's pay and benefits for a fair day's work. Prevailing wage also levels the playing field for Maryland's contractors so that they are not undercut by out-of-state contractors who will try to cut wages to the bone to win work.

LiUNA urges the committee to vote favorably on HB 880.