

March 2, 2022

Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

My name is M. Isabelle Chaudry here on behalf of the Center for Progressive Reform as a Senior Policy Analyst and the leader of our workers' rights program.

Maryland's public agencies take a sweeping array of actions that affect residents and communities but do not meaningfully assess how their decisions impact workers.

By requiring state agencies, before taking any "action," to consider whether companies have received any serious, willful, or repeat violations from the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health, the Climate Equity Act would:

- Ensure that overburdened communities are protected before taking actions;
- Assess how overburdened populations are impacted;
- Keep workers safe and healthy on the job. And ensure the state does not reward those companies that flagrantly ignore its law.

Moreover, the Climate equity act will help ensure that money spent on behalf of our communities stays in our communities. By requiring contractors to engage in local hiring outreach, public works projects will be sure to provide good paying jobs to our residents. Demanding that contractors pay fair wages to their employees not only justly compensates them for the wealth they create, but further stimulates the economies of the local communities where they will spend those wages.

By requiring contractors to participate in state registered apprenticeship programs, we pass on essential knowledge and skills to our state's next generation of workers. The climate equity act will require that contractors associated with an action provide their employees with health and retirement benefits. Corporations cannot force the state to take their workers on as a public charge, even while reaping the profits of government contacts.

An ancillary benefit of ensuring just compensation and treatment for those working on government projects, is that such measures likewise ensure a competent professional workforce, that will get the job done right and in a timely manner. The bill continues in this mission by requiring appropriate licensing requirements for all work done on the government contract.

I urge a favorable report on House Bill 880.

Thank you,

M. Isabelle Chaudry