



Secular Maryland

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February 15, 2022

SUPPORT HB 363

Attorney General - Climate Change Actions - Authorization

Dear Chair Pendergrass, Vice-Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

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This bill authorizes the Attorney General to investigate, commence, and prosecute or defend any suit or action that holds accountable a large publicly traded entity or its subsidiaries for unlawful conduct that contributes to climate change. It also authorizes the Attorney General to hire outside counsel on a contingency fee basis to assist with such an action.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration developed the Annual Greenhouse Gas Index ("AGGI" for short). Updated yearly, the AGGI compares the combined warming influence of the long-lived greenhouse gases—atmospheric gases that absorb and radiate heat—to their influence in 1990. They chose 1990 because that is the year that countries who signed the U.N. Kyoto Protocol agreed to use as a benchmark for their efforts to reduce emissions. By the end of 2020, the warming influence of human-produced greenhouse gases had risen 47 percent above the 1990 baseline. The AGGI has continued to rise steadily since at least 1980. According to the EPA, 35% of CO₂ is created by the transportation sector, 31% by the electricity, 16% by industry and 11% by residential and commercial. For methane it is 30% natural gas and petroleum, 27% enteric fermentation, 17% landfills. For nitrous oxide it is 75% agricultural soil management. For fluorinated gases it is 92% substitution of ozone depleting substances.

The urgency of the climate crisis we are facing should not be understated. It is an existential threat that needs to be addressed now. If passed, this bill would help put us on track to reversing decades of emitting green house gases that have contributed

significantly to the decline of our common environment. We encourage this committee and our General Assembly to step up to our generation's challenge of creating a cleaner Maryland that is healthier for everyone.

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