

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO  
*Legislative District 15*  
Montgomery County

Economic Matters Committee

*Chair*  
Property and Casualty Insurance  
Subcommittee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Delegate Kumar P. Barve  
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building – Room 251  
Annapolis, Md 21401

Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in support of the Climate Crisis Plan – HB 0147.

As Maryland works towards a cleaner and more environmentally sustainable future, we need to take steps to ensure our communities are prepared for eventual climate change disasters. HB 0147 requires Maryland counties to craft a strategy to increase the use of renewable energy; strengthen Maryland’s storm water management systems; reduce energy consumption and vehicle emissions; retrofit existing buildings to become fully electric; and develop a plan to identify and address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities in the county.

The bill establishes the minimum requirements each county must follow when preparing their respective plans. The Maryland Department of the Environment must provide feedback to each county on or before June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The counties must then address this feedback and finalize their plans on or before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. The final plans must be available online and reviewed and updated every three years.

Over time, more Marylanders are experiencing the negative effects of climate change. Today, Maryland temperatures exceed dangerous levels approximately ten days a year; this is expected to rise to 40 days by 2050.<sup>1</sup> Out of the ten warmest years in recorded Maryland history,

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<sup>1</sup> States at Risk, *Maryland Extreme Heat*. Climate Central (n.d.), <https://statesatrisk.org/maryland/extreme-heat#:~:text=Nearly%20110%2C000%20people%20living%20in,40%20danger%20days%20a%20year>

seven were after 2000. In July 2020, Maryland saw its all-time hottest month.<sup>2</sup> With increased temperatures, the state is also at an increased risk of flooding and heavy downpours. Increased rainfall overwhelms our existing infrastructure in vulnerable areas, leading to system failures and catastrophic flooding.<sup>3</sup>

The economic and cultural symbol of our state, the Chesapeake Bay, is at particular risk. In the past century, the sea level in the Bay has been increasing at an average of 1.3 to 1.5 inches per decade; if emissions continue to increase, levels are expected to rise 2.0 to 4.2 feet over this century.<sup>4</sup> Currently, around 81,000 people in the state are at risk of coastal flooding; this number is expected to increase to almost 120,000 people by 2050.<sup>5</sup>

The impacts of climate change extend to every other aspect of our lives. People already at risk due to other factors such as disability, age, socioeconomic status, and living conditions are particularly vulnerable to the negative health and safety consequences of climate change.<sup>6</sup>

Local governments are particularly situated to conduct climate action. 70% of climate change reduction measures and up to 90% of climate change adaptation measures are administered by local government.<sup>7</sup> As local leaders are more connected to the public, they can bring Maryland residents on board with climate action and are better suited to work with local businesses and residents. County leaders best understand local issues and circumstances and can tailor climate plans to the community. Several counties in Maryland already have existing climate action plans; it is essential that all Maryland counties protect their residents from the ongoing climate crises.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to receive your support on this bill.

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<sup>2</sup> North Carolina Institute for Climate Studies, *State Climate Summaries 2022: Maryland and the District of Columbia*. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2022) <https://statesummaries.ncics.org/chapter/md/>

<sup>3</sup> Matt Pusatory, *Severe Weather Brings Flooding to Ellicott City Again*, WUSA 9 (June 9, 2022), <https://www.wusa9.com/article/weather/severe-weather-flooding-seen-in-ellicott-city-again/65-5b4ffbcd-1a8e-4b1e-b386-13e4896ffd28>

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, at 2

<sup>5</sup> States at Risk, *Coastal Flooding*. Climate Central (n.d.), [Maryland's Climate Threats | States at Risk](https://www.climatecentral.org/states-at-risk/maryland)

<sup>6</sup> See NAM President Victor Dzau Discusses Critical Link Between Health and Climate at World Economic Forum, NAT'L ACAD. MED. (Jan. 24, 2023), <https://nam.edu/nam-president-victor-dzau-discusses-critical-link-between-health-and-climate-at-world-economic-forum/>.

<sup>7</sup> Annabelle Jaeger, *Five reasons why local government should influence climate change plans*. Public Leaders Network, The Guardian (Jan. 6, 2015), <https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2015/jan/06/local-government-climate-change->  
plans#:~:text=According%20to%20UNDP%20estimates%2C%20more,us%20to%20take%20effective%20action.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Fraser-Hidalgo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

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Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo