



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Secretary

February 8, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 147 – Environment - Climate Crisis Plan - Requirement – Letter of Information

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information for House Bill (HB) 147 – Environment - Climate Crisis Plan - Requirement. HB 147 requires each jurisdiction to develop and submit for approval to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) a climate crisis action plan to address the effects of climate change.

Climate change is a public health issue which threatens not only Maryland’s environment and economic vitality, but also the health of communities. Failure to address climate change will exacerbate environmental justice issues and health disparities, as under-resourced communities will bear a disproportionate burden of climate change effects.

Indirect health impacts include the occurrence of more food- or water-related infections and respiratory diseases because of the anticipated changes in pollen amounts, air pollution concentrations, and environmental damage due to climate change. More direct health impacts of climate change include heat stroke from extreme heat events, flooding, food-borne illnesses, and diseases from mosquitoes and ticks. Climate impacts can also contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.

Health indicators of climate change can significantly aid jurisdictions as they develop, evaluate, and update their climate crisis plans. MDH’s Environmental Public Health Tracking Portal¹ and the 2016 Maryland Climate and Health Profile Report² include health data related to climate change, and MDH will continue to work with MDE and other stakeholders to collect and provide health data to the public and local jurisdictions.

¹ Maryland Environmental Public Health Tracking
<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/EH/tracking/Pages/home.aspx>

² Maryland Climate and Health Profile Report, April 2016.
<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Marylander/Documents/MCCC/Publications/Reports/MarylandClimateandHealthProfileReport.pdf>

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LH Scott".

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Secretary