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## **HB516 - Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act of 2024**

### **SUPPORT**

Carrington & Associates, LLC is writing to express unequivocally endorse and support House Bill 516, the Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act of 2024, introduced by Delegates Fennell, Charkoudian, Harris, Martinez, Patterson, and Turner. This groundbreaking legislation is a crucial step forward in addressing the pressing issues of climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and environmental justice in the state of Maryland.

#### **Overview of Key Provisions:**

The bill establishes the Climate Crisis Initiative within the Department of the Environment, focusing on assessing greenhouse gas pollution fees, providing benefits to households and employers, and funding climate-related activities. By adding a new part to the Article on Environment and amending relevant sections of the State Finance and Procurement Article, the bill sets the stage for comprehensive action on climate mitigation and adaptation.

#### **Rationale for Support:**

1. **Recognition of Urgent Threats:** House Bill 516 rightly recognizes the urgent threats posed by greenhouse gases to public health, welfare, and the environment in Maryland. With its extensive tidally influenced shoreline, the state is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and flooding.
2. **Commitment to Reduction Goals:** The bill demonstrates a commitment to addressing climate change by setting ambitious reduction targets, aiming for a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2006 levels by 2020 and a long-term goal of achieving net-zero statewide emissions by 2045.
3. **Economic Benefits:** Acknowledging the economic benefits of energy efficiency programs and technological initiatives aligned with greenhouse gas reduction goals, the legislation promotes a sustainable approach that can result in a net economic benefit for the state.
4. **Focus on Clean Energies:** The bill rightly emphasizes the importance of developing and utilizing clean energies such as wind, solar, geothermal, and bioenergy sources, steering Maryland towards a more sustainable and resilient energy future.
5. **Equitable Distribution of Benefits:** House Bill 516 prioritizes environmental justice by establishing the Household and Employer Benefit Fund. The distribution mechanism, particularly for low and moderate-income households, reflects a commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the initiative reach those who need them most.

6. **Incentives for Cleaner Practices:** The inclusion of greenhouse gas pollution fees on fossil fuels, with specific schedules and considerations for different sectors, provides a practical and effective mechanism to incentivize cleaner practices.
7. **Allocation to Infrastructure Fund:** The establishment of the Climate Crisis Infrastructure Fund ensures that the collected fees contribute to essential initiatives, including clean energy adoption, transportation sector improvements, resiliency measures, and a just transition to clean energy.

In conclusion, House Bill 516 is a well-crafted and comprehensive legislative response to the climate crisis. Its provisions not only demonstrate a commitment to environmental sustainability and resilience but also address the socio-economic aspects of climate change, ensuring a fair and just transition for all Maryland residents. We urge all members of the General Assembly to wholeheartedly support and pass this critical legislation for the benefit of current and future generations.