

SB 861

I am writing this comment in support of SB 861, “Public Utilities – High–Energy–Use Facilities – Greenhouse Gas Emissions 3 Reductions.” The state previously committed to rigorously reducing greenhouse gases in the Climate Solutions Now Act and hence, requiring major energy users to meet specific standards in emissions for the coming 26 years is a reasonable and needed mandate that should be enacted and enforced. As an invited co-author of a 243 page climate report for Frederick County and City listing 40 recommendations, technical details on the impacts of the practices put forward, and public and private funding sources, emission reductions are critical to protect air and water quality, public health, local economy, and maintenance of a viable and productive natural community. SB 861 emission reduction requirements is one critical step in that endeavor. If we do not meet the state’s identified goals, multiple natural hazards will increase as 1) floods destroy public and private infrastructure; 2) water-damage creates indoor medical catastrophes derived from black mold or pathogen-rich sewage backing up in basements; 3) high temperature extremes jeopardize health of outside workers; 4) select for toxin-producing ‘algae’ in our waterways, lakes, and drinking water reservoirs that will require huge expensive upgrades to drinking water facilities (\$137M in Toledo, OH, \$10,000/d in operational costs); and 5) intense storms and extended droughts become the norm for our food-producing communities, constraining maintenance of productive, profitable, yet affordable crops and animals. All of these will have devastating impacts on the lower income residents of Maryland as these individuals and families have few discretionary funds nor adequate insurance to cover these high emission-generated climate impacts.

Limiting emissions now falls to you, our leaders. Please be forward-looking and initiate this first essential step for oversight of the largest energy consumers in our state. We can do this but we must start now with the passage of SB 861 to reduce emissions as we move to a green economy that benefits everyone and our natural resources.

Kevin Sellner, Ph.D.  
102 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Frederick, MD 21701