

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony: Public Utilities - High-Energy-Use Facilities - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions (SB 861)
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 7, 2024

Ernesto Villaseñor, Jr., J.D
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, we offer our favorable support for Senate Bill 861, which addresses the urgent need to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions associated with high-energy-use facilities, and urge the committee for a favorable finding. As an organization dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability and combating climate change, we believe that this legislation represents a crucial step towards achieving our shared goals.

Subtitle 10 of Article – Public Utilities offers a comprehensive approach to address emissions from high-energy-use facilities. By defining terms like "Baseline Emissions Level" and "High-Energy-Use Facility," the bill establishes a clear regulatory framework. Its inclusive definition ensures accountability for facilities with substantial energy demand, engaging in activities such as electronic data processing, cryptocurrency production, and cannabis cultivation. This precision ensures all stakeholders are accountable for their environmental impact.

Senate Bill 861's ambitious reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions, including a 60% reduction by 2027 and ultimately 100% by 2040, demonstrate a strong commitment to long-term sustainability. Additionally, the prohibition on the use of carbon offsets or renewable energy credits to meet the reduction targets underscores the importance of genuine emissions reductions. This provision ensures that high-energy-use facilities are incentivized to adopt truly sustainable practices rather than relying on temporary or superficial measures to fulfill their obligations.

Furthermore, the requirement for annual reporting to the commission ensures transparency and accountability in tracking progress towards emission reduction goals. By mandating the submission of comprehensive reports detailing emissions estimates, reduction goals, and electricity supply contracts, the legislation enables rigorous oversight and ensures that progress towards emission reduction targets is accurately monitored and evaluated.



In conclusion, Senate Bill 861 represents a significant opportunity for Maryland to demonstrate leadership in the fight against climate change. By implementing robust measures to reduce emissions from high-energy-use facilities, the state can make meaningful progress towards a more sustainable and resilient future. We urge the committee to support this vital legislation for the benefit of current and future generations.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

CONTACT
Ernesto Villaseñor, Jr., JD | Policy Manager
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
ernesto@chesapeakeclimate.org | 310-465-6943

