

**Thursday, March 7, 2024**

**TO:** Brian Feldman, Chair of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, and Committee Members

**FROM:** Mariana Rosales, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Climate; Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager

**POSITION:** Support SB 861 Public Utilities - High-Energy-Use Facilities - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 861 offered by Senators Lewis Young and Watson. This bill aims to ensure that new high-energy-use industries in Maryland take part in the state's climate goals. It requires that these industries' facilities aggressively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, ultimately to a net-zero level by 2040. This aligns with Maryland's Climate Solutions Now Act goals of reducing GHG emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031 and achieving net-zero statewide GHG emissions by 2045.

Maryland is experiencing more frequent extreme weather events with increasing intensity, including heavy rainfall, high tides, and record heat, causing significant damage to infrastructure, homes, and natural habitats. We cannot rely on business as usual. This bill promotes a more sustainable and resilient future for our state, requiring efficient energy usage and striving to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The expected result is a more rapid, effective, and equitable transition to a net-zero economy.

TNC commends Senators Lewis Young and Watson for their leadership on this issue and their strong support for achieving our state's climate mitigation goals.

**Therefore, we request a favorable report on SB 861.**