

March 6, 2025

Economic Matters Committee
Environmental and Transportation Committee
230 Taylor House Office Building
231 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for **HB1451, the Climate Solutions Affordability Act of 2025**, introduced by Delegate Brian Chisholm. As a third-generation owner of Admiral Cleaners, a local dry cleaning business, I am deeply concerned about the adverse effects of rising electricity prices on Maryland businesses, especially small, family-owned ones.

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 has led to significant increases in utility costs, which are devastating for businesses already struggling with higher wages and supply costs. This is doubly harmful because, in addition to bearing the weight of these increased expenses, we are also seeing decreased revenue as Marylanders' discretionary income shrinks and they reduce their spending.

Maryland was already ranked 47th in the cost of doing business, and these utility price hikes could push us to 50th. Certainly, no large companies will choose to come to Maryland.

Moreover, Marylanders are leaving the state in increasing numbers, as evidenced by a drop in population. Based on social media posts, these numbers may increase exponentially. Many of your constituents are being forced to choose between electricity and food.

The dry cleaning industry lost 30% of businesses after 2008 and other 30% due to COVID. Our industry will likely be further decimated by increased utility costs, causing more family-owned businesses to close.

The Climate Solutions Affordability Act of 2025 provides a reasonable stop gap until the appropriate technology and infrastructure can be implemented.

I strongly urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Whitney H. Kerridge
3rd Generation Owner
Admiral Cleaners