



**MARYLAND  
LEAGUE OF  
CONSERVATION  
VOTERS**

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March 4, 2026

**SUPPORT: - 2026 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act**

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters urges this committee to accept Governor Moore's proposed budget, without further cuts through the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act..

As you continue to navigate an uncertain fiscal outlook and again seek to close a significant budget shortfall, we urge you to pass a budget that recognizes the essential value of our state's natural resources, responsibly protects and enhances Maryland's natural places, invests in climate resilience and clean energy, and ensures appropriate staffing for state agencies.

Investing in the Capacity of Our State Agencies: The Departments of the Environment (MDE), Natural Resources (DNR), and Agriculture (MDA), as well as the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) - the state agencies collectively tasked with protecting the environment - are already making significant contributions to balancing the budget under the plan adopted for FY 2026. The capacity of these agencies, the combined budgets of which are less than 1.5% of state spending, are especially sensitive to cuts. Any further reductions put Maryland at risk of backsliding on our commitments to resource protection, land preservation, and climate resilience.

As you continue to navigate an uncertain fiscal outlook, **we ask that you protect and expand upon the investments that impact our treasured natural resources.** We look forward to working with your Administration to develop a budget that recognizes the intrinsic and essential value of our state's natural resources, responsibly protects and enhances Maryland's natural places, invests in climate resilience and mitigation projects, and ensures appropriate staffing for state agencies. These benefits cannot be fully realized unless agency service delivery, program investment, and enforcement capacities are fully funded. **We respectfully request that you fund the state's environmental agencies - MDE, DNR, MDA, and MEA - at least at FY 26 levels and consider enhancements should fiscal conditions allow.**

We ask you, especially to protect the funds in the Strategic Energy Investment Fund for their intended purpose. Thanks to the vision of the Maryland General Assembly,, Maryland has adopted some of the strongest and most ambitious clean energy and climate resiliency goals in the country. Indeed, Maryland is a

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leader in proactively planning for and addressing the impacts of climate change. In addition to advancing climate pollution reduction and renewable energy, The Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF), which is a critical source of support for advancing the Administration's stated goals of addressing systemic environmental injustices through. At the same time, SEIF investments in advance job creation, resilience, and economic development.

At a time of soaring energy prices, SEIF supports critical programs that reduce costs for families, including both energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades that reduce the amount of energy used to heat and cool homes, as well as the Energy Assistance programs that help those in need to afford their monthly energy bills. The SEIF supports the critical infrastructure needed for vehicle electrification, including school buses. Reducing exposure to diesel fumes emitted by buses and other sources can reduce the risk of childhood asthma and other negative health impacts. Maryland already fails to meet Federally mandated air quality standards impacting the health of millions of Marylanders. Since the SEIF is funded primarily through the interstate Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) program and Alternative Compliance Payments from utilities, this critical work that protects human health and supports households and communities across the state is done without drawing on taxpayer dollars..

**We ask that you dedicate SEIF funds only to purposes that will achieve long-term climate resiliency, pollution reduction, and public health benefits for Maryland.** Further, in light of the loss of hundreds of millions in Inflation Reduction Act Funds, we urge you to dedicate any overage in SEIF revenue above the budget estimates to support valuable clean energy and electrification funding and financing for our schools, local government, and vehicle fleets.