



MARYLAND HB 817, “CARBON REMOVAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK”

HOUSE OF DELEGATES, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FAVORABLE TESTIMONY OF MIKE TIDWELL, DIRECTOR, CHESAPEAKE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Chairman Korman and Members,

I’m Mike Tidwell, director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, and on behalf of our 40,000 supporters across Maryland I am here to enthusiastically support HB 817, the Carbon Removal Regulatory Framework. I want to thank Delegate Foley for sponsoring this important bill.

I have been an advocate and lobbyist for sound climate policy in this state for 24 years, ever since we passed the region’s first Renewable Portfolio Standard to mandate the addition of wind and solar power to our grid. We have since made good strides on climate policy, thanks to the leadership of many of you on this committee. We now have a 50 percent clean energy standard for our electrical grid by 2031 and we have mandated 60 percent cuts in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2032.

Yet scientists now tell us that the clean energy revolution, now well underway in Maryland and across the world, is not moving fast enough to keep the planet at or below the goal of 2 degrees Celsius warming this century. Since 2014, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made clear that we need so-called “negative emissions,” which means sucking from the atmosphere carbon dioxide that has already been emitted, and subsequently storing it safely underground or underwater.

This bill will finally create a framework to allow Maryland to do that, establishing defensible, safe, and scientifically grounded guidelines for carbon sequestration in many forms, including burying biochar or whole trees that have died from storms whose carbon would be released into the atmosphere unless buried in low oxygen clay, keeping the trees from decomposing for a thousand years or more.

These are innovative techniques that work to sequester carbon, and UN climate experts need states like Maryland, with our strong commitments to the climate fight, to move forward quickly with responsible carbon sequestration policies.

This bill allows the Maryland Department of the Environment to work with advocates and experts to form guidelines so the sequestration work can finally begin.

Many thanks,

Mike Tidwell