



TESTIMONY

SB0887 – Labor and Employment – Greenhouse Workers Collective Bargaining and Heat Protection

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lam

Committee: Senate Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Co-Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of **SB0887** on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

Greenhouse workers are on the front lines of climate driven workplace risk. Extreme heat events are increasing in frequency and intensity, and enclosed agricultural structures trap heat in ways that magnify those dangers. Without the ability to organize, workers have limited power to negotiate for adequate ventilation, rest breaks, emergency procedures, or investments in safer infrastructure. Collective bargaining is not only a labor right—it is a climate resilience strategy.

SB0887 contains specific mandate: 5-minute paid rest breaks for every hour the heat index is 90°F or higher. It also directs the Secretary of Labor to establish procedures for collective bargaining and authorizes the Department to investigate and enforce violations. These provisions create a fair, transparent, and enforceable system that protects both workers and responsible employers. By setting statewide standards, SB0887 ensures that greenhouse operations cannot cut corners on safety or suppress worker voice.

Greenhouse workers—many of whom are immigrants, low-wage earners, or seasonal laborers—deserve the same fundamental rights and protections afforded to other workers across the state. Ensuring their ability to organize and secure safe working conditions is essential to building a resilient agricultural sector and a fair economy.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0887.