

HOUSE BILL 695

M3, L6

2lr2386
CF SB 552

By: **Delegate Fraser–Hidalgo**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2022

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement**
3 **(Better Together to Save Our Weather Act of 2022)**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring each county to prepare a climate crisis plan to address the
5 effects of climate change in the county; requiring each county to submit its plan to
6 the Department of the Environment for review and feedback on or before a certain
7 date; requiring the Department to provide feedback to each county on or before a
8 certain date; requiring each county to finalize its plan on or before a certain date;
9 requiring each county to review and update its plan with a certain frequency; and
10 generally relating to climate crisis plans.

11 BY adding to
12 Article – Environment
13 Section 2–1209
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2013 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

16 Preamble

17 WHEREAS, There is definitive evidence indicating that human activity has
18 increased the level of greenhouse gases in Earth’s atmosphere that contribute significantly
19 to climate change; and

20 WHEREAS, Climate change, if left unchecked, will have detrimental effects on
21 human health, natural systems, wildlife, and infrastructure that will dramatically increase
22 costs for individuals, communities, businesses, and government; and

23 WHEREAS, The climate crisis threatens the ability of federal, State, and local
24 government to deliver services, including fire protection, emergency services, flood control,
25 health care, and social services, to populations vulnerable to the effects of climate change;
26 and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, Maryland has 3,190 miles of shoreline that is increasingly being
2 threatened by sea level rise caused by the climate crisis; and

3 WHEREAS, Maryland has billions of dollars of real estate at risk due to sea level
4 rise; and

5 WHEREAS, Scientific consensus demands that the increase in global temperature
6 be limited to not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius to mitigate the most destructive and
7 dangerous effects of climate change; and

8 WHEREAS, The time to take action to reduce climate change is now; now, therefore,

9 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
10 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

11 **Article – Environment**

12 **2–1209.**

13 **(A) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT REQUIRING EACH COUNTY TO**
14 **PREPARE A CLIMATE CRISIS PLAN:**

15 **(1) IS A CRITICAL STEP IN RESPONDING TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS; AND**

16 **(2) WILL REDUCE THE DETRIMENTAL IMPACTS OF AND DAMAGE**
17 **CAUSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE.**

18 **(B) (1) EACH COUNTY SHALL PREPARE A CLIMATE CRISIS PLAN.**

19 **(2) THE CLIMATE CRISIS PLAN REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF**
20 **THIS SUBSECTION SHALL ADDRESS, AT A MINIMUM:**

21 **(I) INCREASING THE COUNTY’S USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY;**

22 **(II) EXPANDING OR ESTABLISHING ENERGY EFFICIENCY**
23 **PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTY FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL ENERGY USE;**

24 **(III) REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN COMMERCIAL,**
25 **GOVERNMENT, AND RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTY;**

26 **(IV) REDUCING AND ELIMINATING THE USE OF FOSSIL FUELS IN**
27 **THE DESIGN OF NEW BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTY;**

1 (V) RETROFITTING EXISTING BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTY TO
2 BECOME 100% ELECTRIC;

3 (VI) TRANSITIONING ALL VEHICLES, INCLUDING BUSES AND
4 SCHOOL BUSES, OWNED OR OPERATED BY THE COUNTY TO ZERO-EMISSION
5 VEHICLES;

6 (VII) PROVIDING CLEAN, EFFICIENT, AND RELIABLE PUBLIC
7 TRANSPORTATION FOR THE COUNTY;

8 (VIII) DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING SAFE INFRASTRUCTURE
9 IN THE COUNTY TO PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION, SUCH AS
10 BIKING, WALKING, AND CARPOOLING;

11 (IX) INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE
12 CHARGING STATIONS IN COMMERCIAL, GOVERNMENT, AND RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS
13 IN THE COUNTY;

14 (X) ENCOURAGING THE USE OF NONFOSSIL FUEL VEHICLES IN
15 THE COUNTY;

16 (XI) CONDUCTING A BASELINE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS
17 INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTY;

18 (XII) ESTABLISHING GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION TARGETS
19 FOR THE COUNTY;

20 (XIII) SEQUESTERING CARBON DIOXIDE GENERATED IN THE
21 COUNTY THROUGH HABITAT PRESERVATION, INCREASING URBAN FORESTS, AND
22 CARBON FARMING;

23 (XIV) DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR IDENTIFYING THE COMMUNITIES
24 AND INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN THE COUNTY THAT ARE MOST VULNERABLE TO THE
25 EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE;

26 (XV) DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR ADDRESSING THE IMPACTS OF
27 CLIMATE CHANGE ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTY, INCLUDING:

- 28 1. MITIGATING THE HEAT ISLAND EFFECT;
- 29 2. PROVIDING ACCESS TO EMERGENCY COOLING;
- 30 3. IMPROVING AIR QUALITY;

1 4. ADDRESSING CLIMATE-RELATED HEALTH CARE
2 NEEDS; AND

3 5. ESTABLISHING ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS,
4 INCLUDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT, FOR HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS;

5 (XVI) ADAPTATION STRATEGIES TO MINIMIZE THE RISKS AND
6 IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE COUNTY; AND

7 (XVII) COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN.

8 (C) IN PREPARING A CLIMATE CRISIS PLAN, EACH COUNTY SHALL:

9 (1) DEVELOP ITS PLAN IN A MANNER THAT COMPLEMENTS
10 APPLICABLE STATE AND FEDERAL GUIDANCE AND PROGRAMS ON CLIMATE PLANS;

11 (2) PRIORITIZE ACTIONS THAT WILL HAVE THE MOST MEANINGFUL
12 IMPACT ON ADDRESSING THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE COUNTY;

13 (3) HOLD AT LEAST TWO PUBLIC HEARINGS; AND

14 (4) PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.

15 (D) (1) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 2023, EACH CLIMATE CRISIS PLAN SHALL
16 BE SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT TO ENSURE THE PLAN PROPOSES
17 MEANINGFUL ACTIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE ITEMS SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION
18 (B)(2) OF THIS SECTION.

19 (2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO EACH COUNTY
20 ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2023.

21 (E) EACH COUNTY SHALL:

22 (1) ADDRESS THE FEEDBACK PROVIDED UNDER SUBSECTION (D)(2)
23 OF THIS SECTION;

24 (2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2024, FINALIZE ITS CLIMATE CRISIS
25 PLAN;

26 (3) POST ITS FINAL PLAN ONLINE; AND

27 (4) REVIEW AND UPDATE ITS PLAN AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 3 YEARS.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
2 1, 2022.