

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1295  
Public School Construction – School District Energy Use – Policy and Study  
House Appropriations Committee | March 10, 2020**

**Steven Hershkowitz, CCAN Action Fund Maryland Director**

The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund supports House Bill 1295, legislation to require school systems to adopt or update energy policies and create plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from school buildings. We thank Del. Solomon for sponsoring this legislation to ensure Maryland leads by example on zero emissions policies that will save a healthy climate for our children and their children.

CCAN Action Fund and our grassroots network throughout Maryland is dedicated to achieving a net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy by 2045, as is recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To create this future, we must invest in frontline and historically disadvantaged communities, protect workers, and create good-paying union jobs that result in greater wealth and income equality.

The electricity and buildings sectors of the economy create about half of Maryland's climate pollution. Our public school facilities are a key place for Maryland to lead by example on the retrofitting of existing buildings and the construction of new net zero emissions buildings, creating electricity, maintenance, and fuel savings while reducing pollution near schools. Wilde Lake Middle School in Howard County and two new schools in Baltimore City are the state's first three net zero emissions school buildings, constructed at minimal additional upfront cost. We need to scale up that work -- helping to create a cultural change where net zero building standards are the norm, not special.

This legislation is a reasonable first step for kickstarting the planning to make that happen. While CCAN Action Fund is prioritizing the Climate Solutions Act (HB1425), which requires net zero building standards for all newly constructed buildings with at least 25% of funding from the state, we recognize the value of broader energy planning -- as long as it results in substantial action in the near future. There are many electricity and heating energy policies beyond new net zero buildings, especially in our existing buildings that will be around for the next two decades or more, that can reduce climate pollution. This legislation will hopefully spur those actions, too.

We urge the Committee to give House Bill 1295 a favorable report.

**CONTACT**

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