

TESTIMONY OF LAWRENCE R. LIEBESMAN, ESQ
SUPPORT SB 912, CLIMATE CRISIS AND EDUCATION ACT
Sen. Ben Kramer Sponsor
BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE

March 11, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Larry Liebesman. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in favor of SB 912

I have practiced environmental law for over 40 years having worked at EPA and as a Sr. Trial Attorney at the Department of Justice. I have been an adjunct professor of environmental law at GW Law School where I taught wildlife law focusing on the serious impact of Climate Change on species habitat. I have also been monitoring the meetings of the Maryland Climate Change Commission charged with developing a plan to meet the mandate of the GHG Reduction Act, signed into law by Governor Hogan, to achieve a 40% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 from a 2006 baseline. **MARYLAND FACES SEVERE RISKS FROM THE CLIMATE CRISIS REQUIRING URGENT ACTION NOW.** In my view there are two strong reasons that justify this important legislation.

FIRST, THE BILL WILL SET MARYLAND ON PATH TO ACHIEVING NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2040

The bill will set statewide GHG reduction goals of 70% by 2030 and 100% by 2040 consistent with the recommendation of the IPCC. **Economists agree that carbon pricing is the most efficient and cost-effective way to reduce GHG emissions while incentivizing green energy.** By putting an increasing fee on fossil fuels at point of entry in Md, the Bill's market-based approach, incentivizes the reduction in fossil fuel CO2 emissions. It would put Maryland on a commonsense pathway to a sustainable vibrant economy. The Bill also provides a way to meet & exceed the current 40% CHG reduction goal in the GGRA by 2030 and will complement programs such as Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI). in fact, it is **highly uncertain whether the 2030 goal can be achieved under current and existing programs and the cut back on federal programs.**

SECOND, THE BILL'S MARKET BASED SOLUTION WILL GENERATE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO HELP FUND CRITICAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE KIRWIN EDUCATION INITIATIVE AND PROVIDE AN EQUITABLE TRANSITION TO A CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

The bill establishes separate funds for education, green infrastructure and household and employee benefits. The fees on fossil fuels and on high polluting vehicles generated under the bill will deliver:

- \$350 M /yr. to help fund the Kirwin Initiative
- \$180 M in year one and more than \$500 M in year ten to fund infrastructure needs
- \$490 M in yr. one and more than \$850M in year ten to provide benefits to protect low -income households and energy intensive trade exposed business from financial harm.

These funds will help communities' transition in a fair and equitable manner to a clean energy economy. We also believe that , based on a recent AG's opinion , there appears to be no legal impediment in enacting a bar to prohibiting companies from passing through such fees to customers. The bill will create an expert based Climate Crisis Council that will develop policy recommendations to achieve the pollution reduction goals of the Act, to fund education through the Kirwan Initiative and to ensure that low and moderate-income households and impacted employers are protected from financial harm.

I urge the Committee to favorably report this important legislation

Respectfully,

Lawrence R. Liebesman, Esq.
5682 Vantage Pt. Rd.
Columbia, md, 21044
(410) 707- 0413
larry.liebesman@gmail.com