



**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Testimony on:** HB0503 - Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 3, 2021

**Bill Contact:** Delegate Pat Young

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all the members of our communities healthy and safe in a clean environment. DTMG strongly supports HB0503 because Maryland needs a coordinated, government-wide effort to address climate change.

Climate change is already here and is an existential threat to the future health and safety of all Marylanders. Maryland already has nuisance flooding, high heat days, and storm surges on a regular basis. International experts have urged action on climate with increasing urgency to protect our children and grandchildren from the worst impacts of climate change.

Maryland has a number of programs that address climate change from various perspectives. What is lacking is a central office with authority to coordinate these programs across agencies. HB0503 will address this glaring gap in Maryland's climate responses by establishing the Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor to monitor ongoing efforts across agencies to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change and keep the Governor and the General Assembly informed.

The Office on Climate Change will also facilitate implementation of recommendations from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and ensure that each state agency considers and addresses climate change in its operations. The Office on Climate Change will also have the authority to initiate climate change research and investigations to fight climate change beyond those included in the Commission on Climate Change's recommendations. Importantly, the Office on Climate Change will assist local governments in development of local plans to combat climate change.

This is exactly the kind of coordination that will make individual programs in Maryland's disparate agencies and localities more effective. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports HB0503 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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