



MARYLAND LEAGUE
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

February 3, 2021

**SUPPORT- HB503: Environment-Office on Climate Change-
Establishment**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee

**Maryland League of
Conservation Voters**

Lynn Heller, Board Chair
Maris St. Cyr, Vice Chair
Michael Davis, Treasurer
Hon. Virginia Clagett
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Maryland LCV supports HB503: Environment-Office on Climate Change-Establishment, and we thank the sponsor for his leadership on this issue.

This year the Maryland General Assembly will, once again, be taking up legislation to take bold steps to address the growing crisis of climate change. With more than 3000 miles of shoreline, and more than 270,000 acres less than 10-feet above sea level, Maryland is one of the most vulnerable states in the nation to the effects of climate change. In addition to the rise in extreme weather events and other climate-change related natural disasters, many parts of Maryland are increasingly experiencing “sunny day flooding,” and extreme heat events that disproportionately affect communities already overburdened with pollution and negative health impacts. The policies outlined in HB503 would provide coordination at the top levels of our state government through the creation of an Office of Climate Change in the Governor’s office to ensure that our state has a central point of coordination to address the challenges Maryland is facing.

Maryland has a Climate Change Commission, with a mitigation working group co-chaired by the Executive Director of Maryland LCV. The Commission makes recommendations for state actions. The Office of Climate Change would take the next step to coordinate the implementation of these recommendations by centralizing current climate change initiatives throughout the state and assisting local governments who request services to improve climate efforts in their communities.

Maryland must take aggressive actions to stave off the most disastrous effects of climate change. But we must also address the impacts that have already arrived by coordinating the efforts of our local, county, and state agencies to build resiliency against future disaster. For this reason, Maryland LCV strongly supports this important bill and urges a favorable report on HB503.