



## **HB 630 - Primary and Secondary Education – School District Energy Use – Policy and Study**

**Appropriations Committee**

**February 17, 2021**

**Position: Favorable**

Chairman McIntosh and Members of the Committee:

**Environment Maryland and Maryland PIRG are excited to support HB 630 to create better tracking and plans for school energy use. Doing so should help increase energy efficiency, promote clean energy, and reduce our reliance on polluting fossil fuels.**

Every day, it becomes even more clear that the impacts of global warming are accelerating. 2019 was hotter than any previous year in human history, breaking records last set in 2018 and 2017. We're feeling the effects – from severe flooding across the state and more frequent red-ozone days, to increasingly powerful storms and droughts throughout Maryland, the US and the world.

Maryland's reliance on polluting fuels puts our health and safety at risk. Our state and public institutions' energy policies must conserve more energy, use the energy we have wisely and efficiently, and rely only on sources of energy that are clean, renewable and tread lightly on our planet.

### **It's time to achieve our climate goals**

Maryland continues to work towards bold climate goals - this session alone, there are many bills that hope to mitigate the climate crisis and set us on a better path to reducing our emissions, increasing renewable energy capacity, decreasing our reliance on petrochemical products like plastic and transitioning our transportation sector away from fossil fuels.

We can't do any of this without a clear understanding of the problem. We can't achieve our climate goals without a plan of action, and a big part of creating that plan is having as much information as possible. HB 630 will give us the information we need to help schools set renewable energy targets *and* actually achieve them. It will also provide critical information to help schools meaningfully reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Protect our planet for generations to come**

School districts are huge consumers of energy. Reducing the carbon footprint of our school districts would be a win for the planet certainly, but it would also be a step in the right direction to protecting public health. From asthma to heatstroke, climate change is making us sick, our kids in particular. In 2015, asthma was [the top reason](#) that students missed school - and we know that our reliance on fossil fuels leads to rampant air pollution that contributes to Maryland having some of the highest asthma rates in the country.

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders and they deserve to attend institutions that are working to protect the planet for their future. Youth activists are speaking up in increasingly large numbers about the climate crisis, and are demanding change. This bill is an absolutely critical first step to making that change, and to showing our students that we are listening to them and that we care about their future.

The lack of information and of a plan make it incredibly difficult to help transition schools to renewable energy and to reduce their overall emissions. We urge you to vote favorably because it is our duty to protect this planet for future generations.