

January 29, 2021

BILL: SB 76
TITLE: Climate Crisis and Education Act
POSITION: Support
HEARING DATE: 2/2/2021
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
Sponsor: Senator Benjamin Kramer

Dear Member of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

I am writing to support SB 76.

Growing up in Annapolis, I have seen firsthand the effects of climate change. The rising sea levels we were learning about in my 4th grade classroom really hit home when we had to take an alternate route to school because downtown Annapolis was under a foot of water. Everyone has seen Annapolis flooded at one time or another. If climate change is not addressed, these floods will not only continue but will cost both homeowners and the Maryland government millions of dollars in remediation. According to research by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Salisbury University, Maryland stands to lose roughly 8.2 BILLION in direct economic losses from flood damage. I believe SB 76's action to reduce fossil fuel emissions, and therefore reduce effects of climate change, will help Maryland avoid this unnecessary and crippling expenditure.

The Climate Crisis and Education Act, SB 76, discourages the use of fossil fuels within the state of Maryland. The funds from the CCEA's fossil fuel fees will direct \$350 million to the MD public education system, and I feel this is an incredible opportunity to raise our schools to the highest level. As a current senior at South River High School and a graduate of Annapolis Middle School, I know that our school system can be improved. I love my school, and I want to see the curriculum, resources, and campuses available to students be the best that they can. SB 76 provides a pragmatic approach to educational spending that will not drain Maryland's budget, and is an opportunity for our schools to become national leaders in education.

SB 76 will not only direct funds to education, but also to low/middle income households and energy-intensive trade exposed businesses (EITE) who are reliant on fossil fuels. I urge you to recognize climate justice as not only an environmental issue, but a social one. Maryland's land is shared by people of all colors, incomes, and backgrounds, and intersectional environmentalism must be taken into account in all legislative spaces where Maryland's environment is discussed. Communities of color

and low income communities are disproportionately burdened with health hazards from policies that force them to live in close proximity to sources of air pollution and toxic waste, such as coal processing plants, sewage works, mines, and landfills. Climate justice is NOT justice if it is not inclusive of all citizens, and the protection of those who suffer the most from climate change is crucial.

The preservation of our Earth, the protection of the marginalized, the transformation that we all want to see in this country- it has been left to each and every one of us. Climate change is a generational issue, and it will take all of us together to turn our planet around. We have a duty to protect our resources and our people that is not political, but moral. Would anyone pass up the chance to do what they could, to be the change for good in our society? SB 76, the Climate Crisis and Education Act, will launch Maryland to the forefront of intersectional environmentalism and educational reform. It is a practical solution to a critical problem, and it is a bill that as a young Marylander I can proudly point to as a tangible promise of Maryland's commitment to fighting climate change.

For these reasons, I urge a FAVORABLE REPORT on SB 76.

Respectfully submitted,

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