



Testimony
Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021, SB 0414
Position: FAVORABLE

Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

My name is Brig Dumais and I am a Political organizer with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. 1199 is the largest healthcare workers union in the country. We represent 10,000 members in hospitals and Long-Term Care facilities across Maryland alone. Our union supports the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 because lowering Greenhouse Gas emissions is critical for protecting our planet, a necessary public health measure, and will ensure a just transition to Green Energy.

A recent study from Harvard University found that people who live and work in areas with high levels of air pollution, particularly from burning fossil fuels, are at a significantly higher risk of dying from COVID19. The researchers stated that "The study results underscore the importance of continuing to enforce existing air pollution regulations to protect human health both during and after the COVID-19 crisis."

Furthermore, public health experts agree that as Climate Change continues to warm the planet, we are at even higher risk of severe pandemics in the future. One example of this is that warmer weather lengthens mosquito and tick season-- both insects that have been known to cause humans to contract very serious illnesses. Another public health concern linked to climate change is as permafrost melts at alarming rates, dormant viruses and bacteria awaken and expose people to more illnesses. There have been recent discoveries of the 1918 Spanish Flu, the Bubonic Plague, and Smallpox being released from melting permafrost.

It is clear that we need to reduce our fossil fuel emissions as soon as possible, which requires cooperation between the environmental and labor movements. There need to be safety nets in place for workers in industries with high fossil fuel emissions. This legislation will require a workgroup comprised of unions that represent building trades workers, registered apprenticeship sponsors, and non-union construction laborers to make recommendations for a just transition, including but not limited to workforce development opportunities for re-training displaced workers from high greenhouse gas emitting industries.

The time to act to significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions is now. Please vote yes on the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 this session for the sake of protecting workers, public health, and our planet.

Respectfully,

Brig Dumais
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