

Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: SB414 - "Climate Solutions Now"
Organization: Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Person Submitting: Joyce Bailey, Climate Change Liaison
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 31, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

We strongly urge you to give a favorable report for SB414 and that you add no weakening amendments. It is critical that the bill maintains its goal of 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2045. In order to achieve that goal it is also crucial that the provisions as they relate to buildings and energy efficiency are maintained.

Buildings generate a significant percentage of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions. In Montgomery County, for instance, the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan notes that 50% of the County greenhouse gas emissions are generated by buildings. Therefore, addressing the energy efficiency of buildings is integral to Climate Solutions Now achieving its goal. We cannot afford to delay or water down the building provisions of SB414.

According to the US Green Building Council "A growing body of evidence suggests zero energy buildings are possible today with no added upfront cost and make for smart investments. Utilizing readily available products, practices, and technologies, new zero emission houses, apartments, offices, schools, institutions, and labs are being constructed in increasing numbers. With state and utility rebates for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, these projects are being delivered at little or no additional first cost."

Residents of buildings, including low-income multifamily housing, face high costs on energy bills. Recent research with a focus on the Baltimore metro area (pre-pandemic) found that at least one-quarter of low-income households have energy burdens above 18%, which is nine times higher than the U.S. average. Cost effective upgrades to large buildings would help save Maryland families money on energy costs.

We therefore request a favorable report on SB414, with no weakening amendments.