



GLEN ECHO HEIGHTS MOBILIZATION

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 414 – Climate Solutions Now Act

March 29, 2021

Dear Members of the Committee,

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization supports SB 414, the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021. Globally, we are at a critical choice point that will determine the course of our future forever. Climate change is here. We are the last generation that will be able to course-correct towards a livable future for all. We must do so. We have the tools, resources and knowledge to act right now, and we must use them.

This bill, as originally proposed and paired with HB 583, ensures that Maryland will be part of the new green future by:

- Ensuring that Maryland follows current climate science by committing to a 60% reduction in carbon emissions below 2006 levels by 2030 and to reaching net zero emissions by 2045
- Restructuring climate justice by mandating that a percentage of future climate spending go to “disadvantaged” communities in terms of climate change, as defined by experts and stakeholders
- Ensuring that labor voices are represented in our planning process, and that jobs benefit those who need them most
- Taking immediate steps to reduce emissions, such as planting millions of native trees by 2030, electrifying state vehicles, requiring net neutral buildings and mandating energy efficiency increases, and preventing the state from considering “road-widening” as somehow beneficial to reducing carbon emissions.

We strongly urge you to give a favorable report for SB 414. Further, we cannot afford to delay or water down the legislation. Accordingly, we ask that you add no weakening amendments. It is critical that the bill maintains its goals for reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve that goal, the provisions, including those that relate to buildings and energy efficiency, must be maintained.

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization (GEHM) is a neighborhood association of concerned citizens fighting on behalf of progressive causes, including the fight against climate change. GEHM supports the Climate Solutions Now bill. In particular, we support the policies regarding buildings and energy efficiency, including schools. With 208 school facilities in its system, Montgomery County Public Schools is one of the largest energy consumers in Montgomery County, spending over \$35 million on electricity each year, only one-third of which comes from renewable sources. Reducing energy consumption and transitioning to clean energy would reduce MCPS’s environmental impact *and* save money.

International experts have urged action on climate with increasing fervor in recent years for good reason: the consequences of staying the course will be highly dangerous. In Maryland we have a lot at stake, with nuisance flooding, high heat days and storm surges already regular occurrences. We have an opportunity to listen to scientists now while signaling to the nation that Maryland is ready to embrace the new green economy. There is no more time to delay on meaningful climate action.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.