



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 414 – *Climate Solutions Now Act*

Hearing Date: March 31, 2021

Bill Sponsor: Sen. Paul Pinsky

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Submitting: Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) -- a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers, and a member of the Howard County Climate Collaboration -- supports SB414, the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021.

We have been educating ourselves and others in Howard County about the climate crisis for over 13 years. We have supported climate change legislation at the county, state and federal level with varying degrees of success during this time, often in collaboration with larger coalitions of county and statewide partners. We are excited about the bold commitments to reduce climate emissions in this bill.

Maryland has been a climate leader in recent years. We saw the disaster of fracking in Pennsylvania and other states and moved to ban it. We have also passed bills calling for steady increases in renewable energy. But we still need to make dramatic improvements. Eastern Shore land is disappearing; farmland and forests are lost to saltwater incursion; and our major cities increasingly face both routine and catastrophic flooding, including in Baltimore, Ellicott City, and Annapolis. Maryland has much at stake, with nuisance flooding, heatwaves and storm surges posing costly and dangerous challenges for our farmers, city dwellers, transportation systems and all our residents.

The pandemic has elevated our awareness about the threats to our health. Those who live in areas of greater air pollution have been more susceptible to disease and death from covid. Yet the worsening climate crisis has all along been increasing the rates of asthma, heart disease and other disorders that interfere with every-day tasks, add to medical costs and shortened lifespans.

We have the responsibility to use the available tools, resources and knowledge to take action right now.

This bill would make a Maryland a leader in climate action by:

- **Ensuring Maryland is in line with the current climate science.** The bill commits us to a 60% reduction in carbon emissions below 2006 levels by 2030 and to net zero emissions by 2045
- **Embracing climate justice.** The bill mandates that a percentage of climate spending must go to communities hit hardest by climate change.
- **Ensuring that labor voices are represented in our planning process** and that jobs benefit those who need them most
- **Taking several immediate steps to reduce emissions**, such as planting 5 million native trees by 2030 and electrifying state vehicles. In addition, buildings that receive at least 25% of their funding

from the state must be net zero, with some exceptions for schools, and incorporate increases in energy efficiency.

This bill is comprehensive. We urge the House of Delegates to join the Senate in passing it. The provisions are cumulative and address different aspects of the climate crisis. We have no time to waste. Any weakening amendments will impede Maryland's ability to meet its climate goals.

International experts have urged action on climate with increasing fervor in recent years for good reason: the consequences of staying the course are dangerous. We have an opportunity to heed the warnings of scientists now while signaling to the nation that Maryland is ready to embrace a climate-friendly economy. We can no longer delay meaningful climate action.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.

HoCo Climate Action

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