

HB0583: Favorable with amendments

Hello committee members.

I would like to ask you to support HB0586, the Climate Solutions Now Act. However, I would ask you to make one minor amendment. The title clearly needs to be changed to the “Climate Solutions In A While Act.” This bill creates committees and asks them to do things that they have consistently failed to do in the past, and asks for their recommendations that the General Assembly will surely balk at. Go ahead and pass it, because planting trees and buying some electric vehicles is better than not doing it, but don’t fool yourselves. This bill will not solve the climate crisis and doesn’t make the tough decisions that are needed.

In coverage at [Maryland Matters](#), the Senate bill sponsor, Senator Pinsky, said, “Not tomorrow, not next year, not the year after. We have no time to waste.” Unfortunately, this bill’s solution is to ask commissions to make reports. And those reports don’t arrive: “The commission was supposed to release an annual report last month, but that was delayed.” Furthermore, the bill’s sponsors, Senator Pinsky and Delegate Stein, “decried the Maryland Commission on Climate Change — on which Pinsky serves — and the Maryland Department of the Environment for offering vague recommendations instead of specific action items. MDE drafted a greenhouse gas reduction plan in 2019, with a goal of reducing emissions by 44% by 2030.” So why does this bill ask MDE to do it again?

This bill is an excellent example of dillydallying and asking others to do what you don’t want to do. Do you want to know what to do? Tax carbon, and ensure that those polluting have to pay. Eliminate or broadly simplify zoning, so that residential and commercial can be efficiently located without regulatory hassle or bans. Toll every Maryland highway. Make roads safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, scooters and wheelchairs, strollers and joggers. Tax the polluting byproducts of coal burning. Why should Maryland’s coal plants get to emit their mercury, lead, arsenic, sulfur, and NOx for free? Put a price on it.

There, now you know what to do. I look forward to anybody interested in climate solutions “now” to enact them. Go ahead and pass this and plant some trees and buy some electric vehicles, but it’ll be woefully insufficient.

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