



Sustainability is the bottom line.

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 29, 2021

RE: Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 (Senate Bill 414 / House Bill 583)

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing today on behalf of Ceres – a national sustainability organization working with the most influential companies and investors to build leadership and drive climate related solutions throughout the economy – to express our **support for the policy goals of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 (SB 414 / HB 583)**. Passing a binding net-zero greenhouse gas emissions goal can help send a signal to the private sector that Maryland is a true leader in tackling climate change and is serious about adopting innovative solutions.

Corporate and investor leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions has reached unprecedented levels. [A growing number of companies](#), both large and small, have set goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with what the science says is required and invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency. They have done this not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it makes good business sense.

In fact, the number of commitments to reach net zero emissions from businesses and local governments [nearly doubled](#) in 2020 as many prioritize a green recovery from COVID-19. Carbon-free, clean energy helps businesses cut energy costs, reduce exposure to volatile fossil fuel prices, and stay competitive. Maryland's position as an early renewable energy and energy efficiency leader has been a boon for the economy, thanks to leadership through innovative public policy.

Given the imperative to take bold action to combat climate change, we believe that bipartisan state leadership is needed now more than ever. Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2016, which updated the state's mandatory targets to reduce emissions 25% below 2006 levels by 2020 and 40% below 2006 levels by 2030, is an essential framework for a clean and thriving economy. However, the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C](#) shows that current goals are insufficient to meet the challenges ahead.

As such, **Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goals should be strengthened to set a target of net zero emissions by 2045, while also including clear and ambitious interim targets.** This will align Maryland's climate policy with the most current science and support the creation of sustainable jobs by distinguishing the state as a smart and secure place to do business.

Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction strategy should also include clear provisions to protect the health of residents in communities of color and low-wealth communities, who are disproportionately impacted by pollution and are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Due to a lack of policy protections and stakeholder engagement, communities of color are disproportionately exposed to harmful particulate matter from the transportation and electric power sectors. Smart provisions within the Climate Solutions Now Act aim to not only reduce pollution in these communities, but also to bring more voices to the table to intentionally invest a portion of state climate funds in environmental justice communities and help create jobs at all levels.

Various provisions outlined in the Climate Solutions Now Act align with growing corporate efforts to build a net-zero emissions economy and meet the urgency of the climate crisis with a suite of bold climate policies that will greatly improve public health and the state's economic resilience to climate change. Supporting investment in transportation electrification, energy efficiency upgrades and retrofits, additional large-scale clean energy procurements, nature-based solutions, and a just transition for workers are all worthy priorities that can and should be integrated with complementary policies such as strong standards and incentives to assure a comprehensive yet responsible approach to transitioning to net-zero emissions.

By passing HB 583/SB 414, Maryland's lawmakers are helping to ensure that the state will continue to develop as a hub of innovation and continues to attract forward-thinking companies ready to invest in the clean energy future. Ceres stands ready to assist Maryland's lawmakers as new policies and programs are developed to accelerate the state's transition to a clean and thriving economy. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with any questions.

Sincerely,



Brianna Esteves
Manager, State Policy
Ceres
esteves@ceres.org

For more information on Ceres visit: www.ceres.org.