



Secular Maryland

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February 11, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT HB0583 (SB0414) Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Secular Maryland appeals to our lawmakers to enact new laws to tackle climate change now. Being rational requires following the empirical evidence wherever it takes us. Climate warming denialism is an attack against rationality that needs to be unequivocally opposed. This bill responsibly confronts this serious problem by setting a greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 60%, an increase over the current goal of 40%, a 5 million additional trees (10% in underserved areas) goal, and a 100% electric state fleet of cars and busses goal, by 2030. It establishes a union workgroup to recommend workforce training and career pathways for displaced fossil fuel workers. It creates stringent energy efficiency measures for building construction.

Trees help reduce air pollution while also mitigating urban heat island that result from buildings and roads absorbing sunlight's heat more than natural landscapes. Air pollution is a health problem. People who live and work in areas with high levels of air pollution are significantly more likely to die from COVID-19, for example. Transportation currently accounts for 40% of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions. We're are losing prime agricultural cropland along the eastern shore because of saltwater intrusion resulting from climate change.