

TAKOMA PARK MOBILIZATION



Environment Committee

Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: SB414 - "Climate Solutions Now"
Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Person Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 31, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

We strongly urge you to give a favorable report to SB414 (Climate Solutions Now) and that you add no weakening amendments. It is critical that the bill maintains its goal of 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero by 2045. In order to achieve that goal it is also crucial that the provisions as they relate to buildings and energy efficiency are maintained.

Passage of Climate Solutions Now is integral to the success of Montgomery County's Climate Action Plan and its ambitious goal of achieving 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2027 and 100% by 2035. We are particularly worried that the provisions as they relate to buildings and energy efficiency are under threat of weakening amendments.

The Montgomery County Climate Action Plan notes that 50% of the County greenhouse gas emissions are generated by buildings. The plan calls for all existing buildings to be net zero by 2035 and all new buildings to be net zero starting in 2022. We cannot afford to delay or water down the building provisions of SB414.

According to the US Green Building Council "A growing body of evidence suggests zero energy buildings are possible today with no added upfront cost and make for smart investments. Utilizing readily available products, practices, and technologies, new zero emission houses, apartments, offices, schools, institutions, and labs are being constructed in increasing numbers. With state and utility rebates for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, these projects are being delivered at little or no additional first cost."

Residents of buildings, including low-income multifamily housing, face high costs on energy bills. Recent research with a focus on the Baltimore metro area (pre-pandemic) found that at least one-quarter of low-income households have energy burdens above 18%, which is nine times higher than the U.S. average. Cost effective upgrades to large buildings would help save Maryland families money on their energy costs. Upfront investments in energy efficiency measures are more than repaid over time in energy savings.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report to SB414 with no weakening amendments.

