



**Testimony**  
**Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021, HB 0583**  
**Position: FAVORABLE**

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Brig Dumais and I am a Political Organizer with 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. 1199 is the largest healthcare workers union in the country. We represent 10,000 members in hospitals and Long-Term Care facilities across Maryland alone. Our union supports the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 because lowering Greenhouse Gas emissions is critical for protecting our planet, a necessary public health measure, and will ensure a just transition to Green Energy for fossil fuel workers.

It is no secret that burning fossil fuels is one of the leading contributors to climate change. Public health experts agree that as climate change continues to warm the planet, we are at even higher risk of severe pandemics like COVID19 in the future. As permafrost melts at alarming rates, dormant viruses and bacteria can awaken and expose people to more illnesses. There have been recent discoveries of the 1918 Spanish Flu, the Bubonic Plague, and Smallpox being released from melting permafrost.

Lung damage and other chronic health conditions were a problem for fossil fuel workers even before COVID19, and the pandemic has made those problems worse. A recent study from Harvard University found that people who live and work in areas with high levels of air pollution, particularly from burning fossil fuels, are at a significantly higher risk of having severe complications or dying from COVID19. When healthcare facilities become overcrowded due to preventable illnesses, like those caused from being exposed to increased air pollution, it is harder for our members to provide the high-quality care each patient deserves.

This Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 is not only an opportunity to protect the environment and public health, it will also benefit workers themselves by requiring a much-needed collaboration between the environmental and labor movements. We all share the values of having clean air to breathe *and* steady employment for building trades workers. This bill forms a taskforce to recommend safety nets for workers in industries with high fossil fuel emissions so they can transition to clean energy industries that will not threaten their health while allowing them to remain employed. These recommendations could include, but are not limited to, workforce development opportunities for re-training displaced workers, early retirement packages, creating new jobs, and more.

The time to act to significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions is now. Please vote yes on the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 this session for the sake of protecting workers, public health, and our planet.

Respectfully,

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