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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### House Bill 583 – Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

### Environmental and Transportation Committee

### Economic Matters Committee

February 11, 2021

## SUPPORT

**Background:** House Bill 583 (HB583) would phase in a decrease of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions by 60% in order to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045. The bill authorizes the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to seek community input and publish ways to ensure this goal is achieved in an equitable way, that accounts for historically underserved areas. The bill also introduces a number of smaller measures to help the state meet this goal. This includes planting 5 million trees, with 10% in urban areas. Requiring newly constructed state buildings to be carbon neutral, and state fleet vehicles and transit busses to be zero-emissions. Landfill emissions must also be closely monitored, and rises are to be investigated. Additionally, the bill includes a study group to develop protections for workers who may be adversely affected by these measures.

**Written Comments:** The urgency of the climate crisis we are facing cannot be understated. It is the single greatest existential threat we face right now, and it therefore needs to be addressed *now*. The measures outlined in this bill are ambitious and will not be easy but are necessary. For certain parts of our state, it already is too late, and if we do not act, it will be too late for the rest.

The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* teaches us to repair the world in which we live in. Jewish law clearly states that we are not to destroy the public domain. If passed, this bill would immediately put us on the track to reverse decades of pollution that have contributed significantly to the decline of our environment and has for generations disproportionately impacted communities of color.

The Baltimore Jewish Council and the The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore are committed to repairing our world. We represent The Pearlstone Center in Reisterstown, MD, a conference center and farm that employs and teaches sustainable practices, many of which are called for in this bill. We encourage this committee to join us in our mission to create a cleaner Maryland that is healthier for everyone. With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB 583.

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

5750 Park Heights Avenue, Suite 329 • Baltimore, Maryland 21215

410-542-4850 • fax 410-542-4834 • baltjc.org

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