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March 29, 2021

The Maryland House Committee on Environment and Transportation

HB0538 Climate Solutions Now

Position: Support

Climate change is taking its toll on birds in Maryland with native forest habitat changes and sea level rise. Already, birds like the Baltimore Oriole, Ruffed Grouse, Northern Goshawk, and an entire suite of colorful wood warblers are leaving their former breeding ranges in the state for points north and west. Marsh birds are in serious decline.

For this reason, Audubon Maryland-DC asks you to vote HB0538 out of committee and onto the floor. We are one of 22 state programs of the National Audubon Society with approximately 19,000 members in Maryland.

The world's top scientists are warning that if we don't act immediately to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it's about to get much worse. Currently, our state's draft climate plan to reduce emissions falls well short of climate scientists' recommendations and actions taken by other states.

In order to slow and reverse the loss of so many bird species in Maryland, we have to drastically improve our climate action plan and put in place policies that will begin reducing emissions immediately. It starts by passing this commonsense bill to achieve net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and adopting a plan that reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030. These targets are in line with recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), made up of the leading climate scientists in the world.

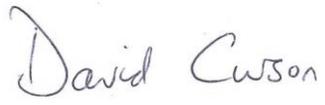
The habitat improvements, including the call for the planting of 5 million native trees and CREP streamside buffer incentives, render this bill even more palatable for birdlife.

The bill is funded by fossil fuel fees expanded under the Hogan Administration. Maryland is one of 11 states in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), an interstate cooperative that caps carbon emissions on fossil fuel polluters and charges a fee for the allowance of exceeding the limit. Under regulations implemented by the Hogan Administration, Maryland is estimated to receive \$400 million in additional revenue by 2030.

This is the measured, bipartisan way for Maryland to save its iconic birdlife. Please vote HB0538 out of committee and vote FOR it when it hits the floor.

Sincerely,

David Curson, PhD

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Curson". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and legible.

Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Maryland-DC