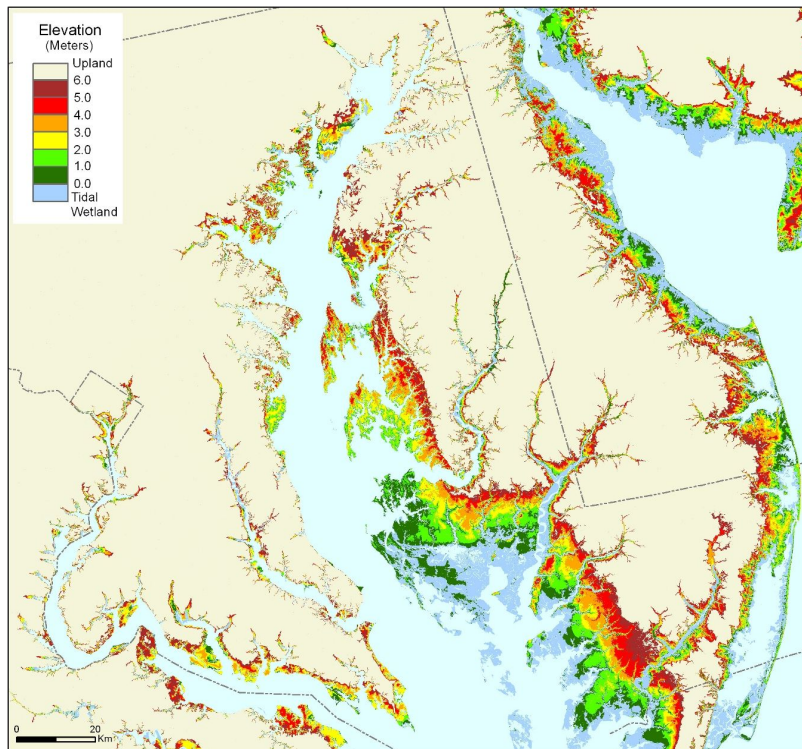


**Testimony in Support of
Climate Solutions Now Act (HH 0583)
House Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters Committees
February 11, 2021**

**Jamie DeMarco, Federal and Maryland Policy Director
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund**

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, I strongly urge a favorable report on SB 0414, The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021.

Lao Tzu said that “If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading” and right now, Maryland is heading toward climate disaster. Last month [new satellite data](#) found that rates of melting ice around the world match the worst case scenarios from scientific modeling. [In those worst case scenarios](#), the oceans rise 8 feet by 2100. [The map](#) below shows that if we let this happen, then children born today will live to see Ocean City disappear beneath the waves.



Elevations of Land Close to Sea Level
Elevations are above spring high water, which is the average high tide during new and full moons, and approximately the inland boundary of tidal wetlands. This map is a general graphical representation of elevations in the area depicted; not designed to estimate the precise elevations at specific locations. Due to the use of a variety of data sources, the accuracy of this map varies. Elevations at specific locations are generally within 30 cm above or below the elevation depicted along the Eastern Shore south of Rock Hall and in Baltimore County, 75 cm in Anne Arundel County and the states of Delaware and New Jersey, and 150 cm elsewhere.
Source: J. G. Titus and J. Wang, 2008. "Maps of Lands Close to Sea Level along the Mid-Atlantic Coast". US Environmental Protection Agency.

To avoid this fate, the latest science put forward by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is the world's leading expert on the climate crisis and is composed of the top scientists from 35 countries, says that wealthy states in wealthy nations have to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2030 and have net zero emissions by 2045. Right now, Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goal is 40% by 2030, and we don't have a binding goal after that. The goal we have set for ourselves is a milestone on the path to climate disaster. Maryland must do its part in the global effort to pull us off the worst case trajectory, and to do that we must pass the Climate Solutions Now Act.

Creating a cleaner economy will help solve climate change, and it will have immediate improvements in our air quality. A recent [Harvard study](#) found that even small increases in exposure to fossil fuel pollution make someone significantly more likely to die from COVID-19.

This legislation passed out of EHEA and B&T in 2020 with bipartisan support, and was on track for passage when COVID-19 ended the legislative session prematurely. It is cross filed in the House as HB 0583 and is introduced by Vice Chair Stein.

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 will change our greenhouse gas reduction goals to be in line with the latest science, a 60% reduction by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2045. It will also require the state to put equity issues front and center when solving the climate crisis, by setting a percentage of all state funds spent to address climate change that must be spent in overburdened communities.

Below is a detailed list of all the provisions in the Climate Solutions Now Act:

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals

- Maryland must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2045.
- MDE cannot use highway widening or unproven carbon capture and storage technologies when planning how to achieve these goals.

Environmental Justice:

- The Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities must identify communities disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis and set a percentage of state funds spent on climate that must be spent in those communities.

Worker Justice:

- A new Work Group will convene labor, legislators, the Secretary of Labor's office, climate groups, and renewable energy companies to make policy recommendations for how to best serve fossil fuel workers in Maryland.

Buildings and Energy Efficiency:

- EMPOWER efficiency gains will be 3% every year, increased from 2% a year
- Buildings that receive at least 25% of their funding from the state must be net zero, with some exceptions for schools.
- New buildings with more than 20,000 square feet of roof space must be solar ready.
- A commercial or residential building with more than 25,000 square feet that undergoes a renovation that costs more than 50% of its assessed value, must reduce its energy use 40% below pre-renovation levels or 20% below what would be required for a new building. This regulation may be waived if the building will not recoup the costs through energy savings in 15 years.
- At least 1 new school in each local school system must be zero emission between now and 2030, and new schools that are not net zero must be solar ready.
- New commercial and residential buildings with more than 25,000 square feet will be required to be more energy efficient, and after 2033 they will be required to be net zero.
- Local jurisdictions will be allowed to enact stronger efficiency standards.
- Local jurisdictions will be required to conduct energy life cycle cost estimates for new buildings comparing the costs of using all electricity versus using combustion sources.

State Fleet:

- 50% of new government passenger vehicles must be zero emission starting in 2022, and 100% must be zero emission after 2025.
- All new contracts to purchase buses must be zero emission after 2023.

Tree Planting:

- Between 2022 and 2030 Maryland will plant 5 million trees, with 500,000 of those trees to be planted in urban areas that have been historically redlined or are economically disadvantaged.
- Increase the signing bonus paid to farmers who enroll in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program by up to \$1,000 per acre.
- A grant program will be created to fund community groups planting trees in underserved urban areas through the Chesapeake Bay Trust.
- A work group will target the best locations for tree plantings to maximize environmental benefits and determine the best way to leverage private funding.

Funding:

- In any year where the Strategic Energy Investment Fund receives more than \$50 million, then the funds over \$50 million but not more than \$20 million will be spent to implement this bill. To be clear, the bill does not take away from any of the existing SEIF funding percentages, it only uses funds that are above and beyond the usual annual budget for SEIF.
- Every year between 2022 and 2030, \$15 million from the Bay Restoration Fund will be used to enhance existing Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture programs and create a new Urban Tree Planting program. As one of the most cost-effective practices to reduce water pollution, tree plantings are a worthy application of Bay Restoration Funds remaining following the Sattre's completion of upgrades at major wastewater treatment plants.

Miscellaneous:

- At landfills where aircraft observations of methane leakage exceed the ground level emission data by more than 25%, The Department must investigate the difference.
- Community solar projects on rooftops, parking lots, or brownfields that primarily benefit low income households are exempted from personal property tax.
- MDE must calculate the social cost of carbon emissions.

Thank you for your careful consideration, and we urge a favorable report on SB 0414.

CONTACT

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