

Testimony for HB0583 - “Climate Solutions Now”

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization: Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Person Submitting: Joyce Bailey, Climate Change Liaison

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0583, the Climate Solutions Now bill. The Montgomery Countryside Alliance was founded to promote sound economic, land-use and transportation policies that preserve the natural environment, open spaces and rural lands in Montgomery Country’s Agricultural Reserve for the benefit of all Washington Metropolitan area residents.

We strongly urge a favorable report on this legislation. The planet is facing a climate crisis which is affecting agriculture, communities and ecosystems both locally and throughout the world. The response from Maryland, the United States and other wealthy nations must be immediate and ambitious. And, importantly, we must ensure that those communities disproportionately burdened by the cumulative impact of environmental pollution and other hazards be an integral part of shaping our solutions.

Important reasons to support the Climate Solutions Now bill include:

Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable

Communities: The bill establishes a 20-member commission, two of whom must be representatives of disproportionately affected communities. The Commission will develop specific criteria for identifying communities disproportionately affected by climate change, develop specific recommendations to address environmental justice concerns, reduce greenhouse gasses and co-pollutants, build climate equity and resilience within disproportionately affected communities, and set a percentage of state funds to be spent for the benefit of those disproportionately affected communities.

Job Creation: The bill encourages new opportunities for employment in greenhouse gas reduction technologies, alternative energy supply and energy conservation, particularly in areas experiencing high unemployment or high rates of poverty. The bill will lead to creation of jobs, including in the energy, building, working lands, and transportation sector.

Worker Justice: The bill requires a new Work Group to convene with representatives from labor, legislators, the Secretary of Labor's office, climate groups, and renewable energy companies to make policy recommendations and develop strategies for how to best serve fossil fuel workers in Maryland and create transitions to jobs created by climate change.

For these reasons we urge you to vote favorably for HB0583.