



Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: HB583 - “Climate Solutions Now”
Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing
Person
Submitting: Diana Younts, co-chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB0583. MLC’s Climate Justice Wing is a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and grasstops organizations focused on getting State level climate justice legislation passed. Each bill for which we advocate is evaluated through an equity lens, with a particular focus on how disadvantaged communities are affected by the bill and the bill’s climate impact.

We strongly urge a favorable report on this legislation. The planet is facing a climate crisis and the response from Maryland 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.

Tree Planting with Carve-Out for Urban Areas: The bill provides funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund for ambitious tree planting with a carve-out for urban areas that can help with heat islands in underserved communities.

Community Solar for Low-Income Households: The bill provides a personal property tax exemption for community solar projects located on rooftops, parking lots, or brownfields that primarily benefit low-income households.

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

MLC Climate Justice Wing:

Maryland Legislative Coalition

MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

WISE

Frack Free Frostburg

Mountain Maryland Movement

Clean Water Action

Maryland Sierra Club

Howard County Indivisible

Howard County Sierra Club

Columbia Association Climate change and sustainability advisory committee

HoCo Climate Action

CHEER

Climate XChange - Maryland

Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/

National Parks Conservation Association

350 Montgomery County

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for

Climate Solutions

Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Audubon Naturalist Society
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Environmental Justice Ministry
Coalition For Smarter Growth
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
MCPS Clean Energy Campaign
MoCo DCC

Potomac Conservancy
Casa de Maryland
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Clean Air Prince Georges
Ji'Aire's Workgroup
Laurel Resist
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Unitarian Universalist Legislative
Ministry of Maryland
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos
Wicomico NAACP
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Chispa MD
Climate Law & Policy Project
Poor Peoples Campaign
Labor for Sustainability
The Nature Conservancy
Clean Air Prince Georges
350 Baltimore
Maryland Campaign for Human Rights
Power Shift Network