



HB0583 - Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

Presented to the Hon. Kumar Barve and Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee
February 11, 2021 1:30 a.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges the House Environment and Transportation Committee a **favorable report on HB0583 - Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021** sponsored by Delegate Dana Stein.

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Mitigating the effects of climate change is a critical concern for reproductive health professionals because of the adverse sexual health consequences associated with rising global temperatures, and the intersection between environmental justice and [reproductive justice](#). HB0583 seeks to achieve net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, this is an essential goal to slow the rate of climate change and accelerating high temperatures.

Rising global temperatures is making excessive heat perhaps the most serious threat to pregnant persons going forward; exposure to unusually hot temperatures can lead to changes in length of gestation, low birth weight, increased stillbirth rates, and neonatal stress.¹ Additionally, increased instances of natural disasters result in a disruption of reproductive health services which can lead to unplanned pregnancies; conversely, natural disasters can displace families and leave them financially unstable resulting in reduced fertility.² In both cases, individuals lose their reproductive freedom to choose when to become pregnant. Furthermore, experiencing a natural disaster as a pregnant person can lead to post-traumatic stress syndrome and poor birth outcomes, including low birth weight and pre-term delivery.³ Substantial research has demonstrated that infants born with low birth weight may be more at risk for many health problems; some may become sick in the first six days of life or develop infections, others can suffer from long term problems such as delayed motor skills and social development or learning disabilities.⁴ These reproductive health outcomes have significant impacts on individuals, families, health-care systems, and societies; the consequences of climate change and its impact on reproductive health disproportionately effect low-income families and [communities of color](#).

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 seeks to ameliorate the effects of climate change with a focus on environmental justice concerns, climate equity, and resilience within disproportionately affected communities. For these reasons, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges a favorable committee report on HB0583**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Bekkar B, Pacheco S, Basu R, & DeNicola N. (2020). Association of Air Pollution and Heat Exposure with Preterm Birth, Low Birth Weight, and Stillbirth in the US: A Systematic Review. *JAMA Network Open*; 3(6):e208243. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.8243

² Tobin-Gurley, J, Peek, L, & Loomis, J. (2011). Displaced Single Mothers in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 28, no. 2: 170-206.

³ Xiong, Xu et al. "Exposure to Hurricane Katrina, post-traumatic stress disorder and birth outcomes." *The American journal of the medical sciences* vol. 336,2 (2008): 111-5. doi:10.1097/MAJ.0b013e318180f21c

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reproductive and Birth Outcomes and the Environment. Retrieved <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showRbBirthOutcomeEnv>