



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB695
Environment-Climate Crisis Plan-Requirement
Better Together to Save Our Weather Act of 2022

Testimony by Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo
February 18, 2022- The Environment and Transportation Committee

HB695 requires each county in Maryland to prepare a climate crisis plan to submit to the Maryland Department of the Environment by June 1, 2023 to address the effects of climate change in their respective county.

In Maryland alone, we are increasingly seeing the impacts of climate change. Today, the State averages 10 days a year when heat exceeds dangerous levels. This is projected to increase to 40 days a year by 2050. Currently, Maryland has about 81,000 people who are at risk from coastal flooding, which is expected to increase to an additional 38,000 people by 2050 due to rising sea levels.ⁱ This past October right here in Annapolis, we saw the fourth worst flooding in the city's history.ⁱⁱ These events are just going to keep getting worse if we do not start getting serious about climate change now.

This bill stipulates that each county's climate crisis plan requires at a minimum:

- Increasing the county's use of renewable energy
- Expanding or establishing energy efficiency programs in the county for residential and commercial energy use
- Reducing energy consumption in commercial, residential, and government buildings in the county
- Reducing and eliminating the use of fossil fuels in the design of new buildings in the county
- Retrofitting existing buildings in the county to become 100% electric
- Transitioning all vehicles, including buses and school buses, owned and operated by the county, to zero-emission vehicles

- Providing clean, efficient, and reliable public transportation for the county
- Designing and implementing safe infrastructure in the county to promote alternative modes of transportation
- Conducting a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory of existing conditions in the county
- Establishing greenhouse gas reduction targets for the county
- Developing a plan for identifying the communities and infrastructure within the county that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change
- Developing a plan for addressing the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities in the county by
 - Mitigating the heat island effect
 - Providing access to emergency cooling
 - Improving air quality
 - Addressing climate-related health care needs
 - Establishing energy efficiency programs, including financial support for heating and cooling systems

HB695 will ensure that every county in our State has a proactive and forward-looking plan in place to effectively address the undeniable impacts of climate change. I urge a favorable report on this bill.

ⁱ [Maryland's Climate Threats | States at Risk](#)

ⁱⁱ [Flooding in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County | PHOTOS - Capital Gazette](#)