



MARYLAND LEAGUE
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

HOTLIST

Week of January 18, 2021

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters is pleased to present the "Hot List" – a detailed list of environmental legislation moving through the Maryland General Assembly. Usually, our volunteers would deliver the Hot List to your office every Tuesday however, this year, it will be emailed to your office. We hope you find this weekly communication helpful and instructive as you tackle important environmental bills this session. If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Harbeson at kharbeson@mdlcv.org or 410-280-9855, extension 202.

MARYLAND LCV ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

Title: Transit Safety Investment Act of 2021

Sponsors: Del. Lierman/Sen. McCray

Bill Numbers: HB114/SB199

Committee Assignments: Appropriations/Budget and Tax

Brief Description: Mandates \$123 million from the Transportation Trust Fund annually for the next six years to address transit “state of good repair” needs identified by the MTA. MTA buses, light rails, heavy rail, and commuter buses have the highest breakdown rate across the country. Investment in transit produces roughly twice the number of jobs per dollar as the same investment in roads. The jobs created are middle-class, family-sustaining, and often held by women and people of color. The 2021 introduction will include language supporting worker protection. Additionally, transportation is the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and by supporting a reliable and safe transit system will help reduce the amount of emissions from vehicles.

Equity Implications: Because a safer and more reliable transit system will support middle class jobs -- many held by women and people of color -- this bill goes directly to assisting low-wealth communities. In Baltimore, bus ridership during the pandemic has been higher than many comparable systems across the country, which is an indication of how many people rely on it to access jobs, healthcare, education, and other essential destinations and lack other alternative methods of transportation.



Title: Climate Solutions Now

Sponsors: Del. Stein/Sen. Pinsky

Bill Numbers: TBD

Committee Assignments: TBD

Brief Description: This bill changes Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction requirements to more ambitious goals of 60% below 2006 levels by 2030 and net neutral by 2045. The bill also calls on the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to determine the percentage of state funds spent on climate change that must go to environmental justice communities. The bill will also create a work group to protect impacted workers. Finally, the bill provides several low cost mitigation policies, including tree plantings in underserved urban areas and a shift to zero-emission busses.

Equity Implications: this bill has significant environmental justice implications. Climate change disproportionately impacts many low-wealth communities and communities of color, including impacts to health, local environment, and income. This bill will directly assist these communities in three primary ways:

1. Reduce the emissions causing climate impacts;
2. Ensure a portion of state climate funds are spent on environmental justice communities
3. Help create jobs at all levels.
4. Invest in tree-planting, focusing on underserved urban communities

Title: Environmental Justice Reforms

Sponsors: TBD

Bill Numbers: TBD

Brief Description: The Report of the Senate President's Advisory Workgroup on Equity and Inclusion includes a set of eight recommendations to address endemic issues of environmental injustice in Maryland. Maryland LCV will be prioritizing passage of these critical reforms, which include:

- Revisions to the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities mission and membership.
- Mandated use by all permitting agencies to consider environmental justice when assessing permitting decisions.



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- Requiring Maryland Department of the Environment to work with the University of Maryland to produce environmental justice data for regular inclusion in daily operations, and regularly update a bank of potential Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP), for violators of environmental laws to perform in remediation, and create determinations about whether these SEPs are appropriate and commensurate to the scope and cost of the violation.

Equity Implications: The bill as designed would meaningfully address environmental justice inequities.

Title: Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act of 2021

Sponsors: Del. Korman/Sen. Zucker

Bill Numbers: HB334/SB137

Committee Assignments: Environmental Matters and Appropriations/Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Brief Description: This bill mandates that, beginning in 2024, all contracts for state-purchased buses need to be for zero-emission vehicles, leading to a complete transition of the fleet by 2035. While the initial monetary outlay for electric buses is higher than their diesel counterparts, the long-term savings in fuel, operation, and maintenance costs makes zero-emission vehicles a more cost-effective investment over the lifetime of the vehicles. More importantly, transitioning to zero-emission buses will reduce the health and environmental risks from air pollution caused by diesel fumes. *NOTE: The provisions in this bill are also included in the Climate Solutions Now bill.*

Equity Implications: Electric buses reduce pollution and health impacts to people living near bus routes, as well as to the bus drivers and regular transit riders who are exposed to levels of diesel fumes captured in the cab of the buses and the exhaust. The bill will have an especially beneficial impact on the overburdened, low-income communities and Baltimore city students who use MTA buses.



ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Title: **Plastic Pollution Reduction Act**

Sponsors: Del. Lierman/Sen. Augustine

Bill Numbers: HB314/SB223

Committee Assignments: Environment and Transportation/Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Brief Description: This bill bans single-use plastic bags for distribution at point-of-sale for all retail in the state, with limited exemptions.

Equity Implications: Litter has a disproportionate impact on communities that lack adequate public services and have more blight. Studies demonstrate that it contributes to impaired mental health and quality of life.

Title: **Stop PFAS Pollution Act**

Sponsors: Del. Love/Sen. Elfreth

Bill Numbers: HB22/SB195

Committee Assignments: Health and Government Operations/ Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Brief Description: Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are a family of approximately 5,000 man-made organic chemicals. PFAS are used in non-stick cookware like pans, fabric stain-protective coatings, fast food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, personal care products, and firefighting foams. Because of their unique carbon-fluorine bonds, PFAS are resistant to degradation in the environment, can persist for decades in water and air, and accumulate in our bodies over time. This bill comprehensively addresses PFAS contamination by adopting some of the country's strongest PFAS policies, which will:

- **Turn off the tap on new contamination** by stopping the use of PFAS in food packaging (following the lead of NY, WA, ME) as well as in rugs and carpets (like VT).
- **Hold polluters accountable** by ensuring that chemical manufacturers are legally and financially responsible for contamination of our waterways from PFAS.
- **Protect our air and water** by banning the mass disposal of these chemicals by incineration (following NY lead)

Equity Implications: We don't yet know the scope of our PFAS pollution problem in Maryland, although the substance is present throughout the state in waterways and aquatic life that people eat. Generally speaking, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by toxic chemical exposure in consumer products, homes, and water.



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Maryland League of Conservation Voters distributes our “hotlist” every week to make sure you know the bills that we are tracking, where they are in the process, and what the environmental position is for those bills. Maryland LCV also produces a scorecard at the end of every legislative Session. Scores are drawn from all public record votes (Committee, Floor, Amendment) on every bill that we are tracking.

While not every bill is scored, any bill on our hotlist, or any vote that we communicate with you about by e-mail or through this Hotlist, may be scored.

If you would like a bill considered for inclusion on the Hotlist, please contact Kristen Harbeson at kharbeson@mdlcv.org