



THE CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW ACT



Bill SB 414/HB 583

Sponsored by Delegate Stein and Senator Pinsky

Environmental Justice Provisions

Fundamentally, this bill is an environmental justice bill. Climate change disproportionately impacts many low wealth communities and communities of color, including impacts to health, income, environment and communities.

Environmental Justice Commission:

The Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities was established in 2001. After two decades, with little significant environmental justice policy advancement, it is clear that this Commission in its current configuration is not equal to the task. This bill changes the mandate of the commission.

Tree Planting



- Between 2022 and 2030 Maryland will plant 5 million trees, with 500,000 of those trees to be planted in urban areas that have been historically redlined or are economically disadvantaged.
- A grant program will be created to fund community groups planting trees in underserved urban areas through the Chesapeake Bay Trust.
- A work group will target the best locations for tree plantings to maximize environmental benefits and determine the best way to leverage private funding.
- This program will be paid for out of the Bay Restoration Fund

State Fleet



- All new contracts to purchase MTA buses must be zero-emission after FY2023
- The total cost of these zero-emission buses will be paid for out of the Transportation Trust Fund

Methane Leakage



Require air monitoring of methane at landfills, Require emission reductions from retrofitted large buildings & Require new state buildings to be net neutral, with exceptions for schools

Community Solar



Projects serving majority low-income customers, and projects located on land that has already been developed, tend to cost more and typically don't benefit from the economies of scale that large ground-based projects do. As a result, low-income communities don't equally benefit from the expansion of solar energy.

- Community solar projects on rooftops, parking lots, or brownfields that primarily benefit low income households are exempted from personal property tax.

The *Climate Solutions Now* bill is similar to the *Climate Solutions Act of 2020*, but has been changed to streamline and strengthen the provisions.

The Climate Solutions Now Act will rebuild Maryland's economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and ensure that Maryland's overburdened communities are prioritized.

For more information, contact Kristen Harbeson, kharbseon@mdlcv.org or visit www.mdlcv.org



MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS



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Environmental Justice Commission:

- Recommend a methodology for identifying communities disproportionately affected by climate change;
- Develop specific recommendations to address environmental justice concerns, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and co-pollutants, and build climate equity and resilience within disproportionately affected communities;
- Set goals for the percentage of state funding for greenhouse gas emission reduction measures that should be used for the benefit of disproportionately affected communities
- The Commission will release a report on or before December 31, 2022

[Please note: There is a separate piece of legislation that urges some changes to this commission beyond the floor outlined in the Climate Solutions Now Act. Maryland LCV is strongly supporting the passage of that with strengthening amendments and more robust legislation.]

State Fleet:

Diesel emissions are the most harmful type of transportation emissions, and are carcinogenic to humans and causes long-term damage to lungs in children. Studies show that diesel pollutants concentrate inside bus cabins, with exposure as much as four times the level of toxic diesel exhaust as someone riding in a car. While these effects are even more dangerous to children whose lungs, heart, and other organs are still developing, MTA workers are also exposed. A majority of these workers are women and people of color. While these buses may be a small percentage of the total toxic emissions from the transportation sector, the transportation sector is the single largest contributor to climate pollution in Maryland, and conversion to electric buses aids in reducing that overall load.

Tree Plantings:

Due to a legacy of racist planning policy underserved urban communities typically have significantly fewer trees than other communities. Urban tree cover has been linked to improved physical health, cognitive abilities, and several mental health benefits including better ability to cope with stress, anxiety, and depression. Urban green spaces also provide opportunities to develop social capital and cohesion within communities, especially those currently underserved by existing financial and healthcare infrastructure. Well-maintained urban forests can moderate temperature and microclimate, reduce stormwater runoff, and minimize soil erosion; ultimately improving the water quality in local tributaries and the Chesapeake Bay at large. Tree plantings in developed areas confront the localized effects of climate change by reducing building energy use, offsetting carbon dioxide emissions, and improving air quality, and tree plantings are one of the most cost effective and immediately implementable methods of carbon drawdown.

Methane Leakage:

A 2016 study found a consistent pattern of placing hazardous waste facilities in neighborhoods where poor people and people of color live. Living near hazardous-waste landfills lead to significant health impacts.

