2022 Environmental Legislative Summary

HISTORIC CLIMATE VICTORY HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESSFUL SESSION

The 90-day 2022 Maryland legislative session ended at midnight on April 11, after the traditional marathon final day known as "Sine Die." For Maryland LCV and all Marylanders, **the session may be remembered as one of the most successful and momentous in decades.**

After years of frustration, we — along with our community activists and partners — achieved a historic breakthrough on climate legislation that is among the country's most ambitious. Maryland LCV and its supporters played a vital role in getting this legislation across the finish line and in ensuring that the final bill included strong equity provisions.

The General Assembly also delivered on several of our other legislative priorities, including legislation that advances the state's transition to clean, electric school buses using a partnership between school districts and utilities and legislation that will make the benefits of solar energy more accessible to low- and moderate-income households.

As we head into the primary election season, the successes of the 2022 legislative session provide a valuable reminder that Maryland LCV's core mission of cultivating and electing sound conservation candidates is crucial to achieving meaningful and lasting environmental victories.

We are enormously grateful to our supporters and to our legislative leaders who delivered for Maryland's environment and communities this session.

Following are highlights from the 2022 legislative session.

Climate & Transportation

Maryland LCV's top priority for the 2022 legislative session was the **Climate Solutions Now Act (SB528)**, landmark legislation that will advance Maryland's move away from fossil fuels in favor of clean energy sources.

Throughout the session, Maryland LCV worked behind the scenes with leadership to ensure the strongest version of the bill made it to the Governor's desk. We and our Chispa Maryland program also played a key role in ensuring that the final bill incorporated strong equity elements, including targeting new resources to communities that are overburdened with pollution sources.

Emission-reduction highlights of the Climate Solutions Now Act (SB528):

- Sets goals for Maryland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent by 2031 and to reach net-zero emissions by 2045. These emissions targets are the nation's most ambitious, but they are achievable with the right policies and investments.
- Drives the development of a new building energy performance standard that will require larger buildings to become all-electric and move away from using oil or gas for heat and hot water. This step is needed because buildings account for nearly 20 percent of the greenhouse gasses generated in Maryland.
- Provides resources to finance innovative clean-energy strategies and complement private investment. These investments will demonstrate new approaches for accelerating the move to clean energy and include a requirement that 40 percent of these resources are invested in low-to-moderate neighborhoods.
- Starts planning for a smart electric grid equipped to handle our expanded use of clean energy.
- Requires that by 2030, each procurement unit of the state ensures that 75 percent of the electricity procured for use in state facilities comes from no- or low-carbon sources.
- Establishes an electric school bus pilot program to include the partnership between the electric companies and school districts

to allow the electric companies to use excess storage from the bus batteries. Maryland LCV and Chispa Maryland rallied hundreds of voices in support of this initiative, which will protect school children while cleaning our air. (also **HB696/SB948**)
- Requires each county Board of Education to purchase only electric school buses after 2025 (if there is funding available).
- Requires the electrification of the state fleet by 2031 and light-duty vehicles by 2036. (also **HB94**)

FUTURE Act (HB729/SB471)

This bill, which didn't pass, would have mandated a transition to zero-emissions for Maryland's State University System.

Clean Truck Rule (HB829/SB687)

This bill, which didn't pass, would have signed Maryland onto the Advanced Clean Truck Rule to drive electrification of medium- and heavy-duty trucks. On a positive note, an amendment to **HB1391 (Clean Cars Act)** moves us in the right direction by creating a grant program for medium-and-heavy duty zero-emission vehicles.

Environmental Justice & Jobs

Along with its community partners, Maryland LCV is pushing Maryland to create a comprehensive policy framework to achieve environmental justice in the state, *based on community-driven solutions*. Although the state still falls short of that paradigm shift, the 2022 legislative session delivered significant equity advances to communities that are disproportionately harmed by environmental and public health problems.

Note: Several of our priority environmental justice initiatives for the legislative session, which would normally be advanced as discrete bills, were instead successfully incorporated into the **Climate Solutions Now Act (SB528)**, including the following:

- Exempts solar on rooftops, parking garages, and brownfields from property taxes if it provides more than 50 percent of the energy to low- and moderate-income (LMI) households at a cost that is at least 20 percent lower than what the electric company charges. (also **HB76/SB264**)

- Requires that at least 40 percent of the newly created Climate Catalytic Fund monies go to LMI communities.
- Creates clear definitions of communities that are "underserved" and "overburdened" to ensure they are better served by future legislation.
- Creates a process for determining communities that are disproportionately affected by climate impacts and for developing strategies to address environmental justice concerns in those communities.
- Expands the Chesapeake Conservation Corps to engage more young people in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

Other bills that passed and promise to advance environmental justice in Maryland include:

Energy Performance Targets & Low-Income Housing (HB108/SB524)
Updates the state's EmPOWER program so that its post-2025 goals include reaching underserved communities.

Investment in Overburdened Communities (HB1033)
Ensures at least 40 percent of mitigation funds from certain programs will be directed to overburdened and low-income communities. (The bill didn't pass, but the language from the bill was added to the 2023 Maryland state budget.)

RPS Alterations (HB11)
This bill, which didn't pass, would have removed all incineration, including waste-to-energy incineration, from the State Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

Water & Health

✓ Discharge Permits (HB649/SB492)
Requires the Department of the Environment to clear the backlog of administratively continued permits, and accounting for permit-holders in non-compliance.

✓ Forest Mitigation Banks (HB960/SB651)
Would have accelerated forest loss; this bill failed to receive a vote (which was a positive outcome for Maryland's forests).

✓ PFAS Chemicals (HB275/SB273)
Limits the use of hazardous PFAS chemicals in consumer products and fire-fighting foam.

✗ Environmental Rights Amendment (HB596/SB783)
This bill, which didn't pass, would have authorized a constitutional amendment to guarantee every Marylander's right to a clean and healthful environment.

What's Next

The achievements of the 2022 legislative session are significant and position us well for making more progress in the years ahead. We will soon begin the groundwork to ensure that bills that failed this session are back in play in 2023.

We are also encouraging Maryland's gubernatorial candidates to adopt our progressive climate justice vision, and we fully expect Maryland's next governor to build on the victories of this legislative session to advance the state towards 100 percent clean energy and truly equitable environmental policies. The voices of our supporters were powerful in the 2022 legislative session and will continue to be crucial to our success.

MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

We use political action and education to fight for clean water, healthy air, and a resilient climate for everyone in Maryland. Join us!

In addition to more than 150 meetings with legislators and allies, Maryland LCV coordinated the following grassroots actions in support of the Climate Solutions Now Act and our other legislative priorities:

- mobilized more than 12,000 Marylanders to contact their legislators,
- ran a door-to-door canvas in three critical legislative districts, and
- turned out more than 200 people to events at the capitol supporting the bill.

Following the Senate passage of the bill, Maryland LCV organized a thank-you event outside the Capitol with appearances by Maryland Speaker Adrienne Jones and other legislative champions.

Maryland LCV also published a full-page ad in the Baltimore Sun and delivered 10,000 constituent-signed postcards to Governor Hogan's office urging him not to veto the Climate Solutions Now Act.

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