



## Maryland League of Conservation Voters' Response to Maryland's Climate Pathway

The state of Maryland is a recognized national leader in our efforts to address the climate crisis. The Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA) of 2022 set targets to reduce emissions 60% by 2031 and be net zero by 2045. Maryland's Climate Pathway report illustrates the significant positive impact of reaching these targets, with a projected \$296-667 million in additional health benefits in 2031 compared to current policies. Maryland LCV commends the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for ensuring the Climate Pathway report was published by the date required in CSNA, the collaboration with the University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability (CGS), and for the public input process via a series of listening sessions.

In our recommendations, we first include a framework of 100% clean energy supportive of Governor Moore's commitment that should be a core building block for the state's climate plan. Then, we detail several considerations in evaluating Maryland's Climate Pathway, based on the limitations of the model underlying the report. Finally, we provide priorities for the state to consider in writing its climate plan due at the end of the year. For several sections, we also include perspectives from grassroots leaders, *promotoras*, who are part of Maryland LCV's Chispa program, which is focused on Latino outreach. All *promotoras* are trained through Chispa Maryland to work with their community to promote key environmental issues at all levels, including advocating for clean, electric school buses that protect the health of their children and the air we all breathe.

### **State Planning for 100% Clean Energy**

Maryland LCV recognizes and supports the Moore administration's leadership to achieve 100% clean energy, which so far has included advancing offshore wind, supporting vehicle electrification\* and solar deployment, and most recently, creating and funding a grant program to bring heat pumps into more homes. Maryland LCV is launching a 100% Clean Energy campaign that will amplify these successes, and continue to create more. Working towards 100% clean energy is also an opportunity to build health and equity in communities across Maryland who have been historically overburdened by environmental pollution and resulting health outcomes and underserved by state policies and resources. With intentional planning and input directly from impacted communities, clean energy policy can reverse the harms of the past.

\*We include vehicle electrification in our 100% clean energy campaign because it is critical to power electric vehicles from a clean grid. These efforts must be coordinated through legislative advocacy and regulatory implementation.

30 West Street, Suite C  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-280-9855  
www.mdlcv.org



### Recommendations:

- Maryland's Climate Plan needs to be aggressive and provide specific actions to meet 60% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2031.
- Transportation and electricity use are the two largest sources of emissions in the state, accounting for more than half of total emissions. Maryland's climate plan should accordingly direct resources and solutions to these sectors, including a framework and specific actions to achieve 100% Clean Energy by 2035.
- As the state makes its climate plan, it should apply Justice 40 across investments and prioritize job training in green and emerging fields in communities facing disinvestment.
- Prioritize hiring and empowering a Chief Sustainability Officer for the state to coordinate these efforts.
- Implement more robust efforts to apply for federal funding through the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act.

### Limitations of Maryland's Climate Pathway Model

One of the main limitations with the model used by the CGS team is the underlying assumption that Maryland is meeting and will continue to meet its current renewable energy goals set forth by the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The model assumes in Maryland's Climate Pathway that both wind and solar generation increase fivefold by 2031, with solar accounting for 33% of in-state generation. This projection ignores the present reality that Maryland is well below the trajectory needed to meet even the present RPS solar target of 14.5% of electricity consumption by 2031, and will need significant policy intervention to reach our existing goals. The report also projects that 2.2 GW of power would be coming from OSW by 2035 and 6 GW by 2045, which does not reflect the state's current goal of 8.5 GW by 2031.

Because of the model structure, several of the policies included do not provide implementation details. The type of model CGS used started with the CSNA target of 60% emissions reduction by 2031 and worked backwards, working through each major sector and then using an economy-wide cap and invest program to make up the difference. The report does not include details on any pricing structures or any aspect of the cap and invest program, which was outside the scope of this report. The report relies on the cap and invest program to reduce emissions by the 4.8 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e left after implementing all other new policies, however it refers to this program as a "theoretical program that does not exist today." This creates a significant information gap in the report and potentially a significant gap in meeting the emission reduction goals.

Maryland's Climate Pathway includes "a clean electricity standard (CES) requiring 100% of in-state electricity to be produced from clean sources by 2035," but does not include details on what would be included, or any interim targets. [A number of other states](#) have considered and/or passed a Clean Energy Standard with the primary purpose of creating a legislative and regulatory



framework to drive clean energy programs and funding. As part of Maryland's climate plan, Maryland LCV does recommend that the benefits of a Clean Energy Standard are assessed and consideration should be given to introducing legislation as soon as possible to create such a standard.

Maryland's Climate Pathway also includes no changes to Tier 1 of the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard in its model, which should be under consideration as part of the climate plan MDE releases later this year. As Maryland moves towards 100% clean energy, the RPS should be revised to ensure state dollars and private investments are allocated to truly clean and renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and geothermal. Removing combustion sources of energy from Tier 1 would mean that these sources would continue to operate but are not able to produce and profit from RECs.

Another limitation of the model and including only the climate goals of 60% reduction of GHG emissions by 2031 and net-zero by 2045 as targets, is that broader societal impacts are modeled as co-benefits and not goals or targets of the modeling effort. Equity is mentioned in each sector's discussion/additional considerations. Building equitable pathways for Maryland's climate policy will require equity is beyond a consideration and is instead core to investment and infrastructure decisions. Additionally, an external analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of a plan that largely assumes status quo transaction conventions will not fully realize socioeconomic benefits, will result in issues in planning and implementation, and reinforce inequitable practices in land use, waste management, and energy markets. We recommend building equity into a planning process by prioritizing policies and solutions that have the most co-benefits, e.g. through water quality improvements (discussed below) and health improvements.

Lastly, the limitation of the Climate Pathway Report is language accessibility. The report includes technical modeling that informs a variety of policies for the state to implement, but does not include a plain language summary or a summary in any other language other than English. 19.5% of Marylanders speak a language other than English at home (8.5% of Marylanders speak Spanish at home) and a little over 7% of Marylanders speak English less than very well. Through our Chispa program, Maryland LCV works directly with Spanish speaking Marylanders on environmental initiatives and we include several of their recommendations for Maryland's climate here.



## Considerations for Maryland's Climate Plan

### Clean Energy

Accelerate the development of wind and solar energy to reach 100% clean energy generation by 2035. Namely, the Climate Plan should ensure full implementation of the POWER Act and provide leadership on solar siting and permitting decisions.

1. Fully and expeditiously implement the 2023 POWER Act
  - a. Public Service Commission (PSC) Transmission Study
    - i. Monitor and accelerate this study to ensure the PSC and PJM will develop a well-informed RFP for any necessary transmission improvements. Work closely with the PSC on RFP outreach to make sure the state receives the best bids on the needed transmission improvements.
    - ii. Ensure the PSC is fully staffed to implement the POWER Act, including new positions that need approval from DGS to interface with PJM.
  - b. Department of General Services (DGS) Procurement Bids:
    - i. Accelerate the DGS procurement bid process for a first phase power purchase agreement to procure up to 5,000,000 MWh annually of offshore wind energy by encouraging applications, publicly highlighting this more equitable procurement model, and referencing how this model links to the importance of 100% Clean Energy.
2. Address Solar Siting [Renewable energy siting]
  - a. While the state has broad goals for increasing production of solar energy, counties across the state have passed local zoning restrictions and ordinances to make it difficult for solar projects to be built - especially projects less than 2 MW that are not subject to the CPCN process. The guidance outlined by the Climate Pathway Report provides an opportunity to create state solar siting guidelines that ensures that every county contributes to the state goals of a clean energy future and deployment of solar projects is accelerated. The state should lead in creating a statewide solar siting framework that sets state goals and oversight for solar siting, but gives counties and municipalities flexibility regarding how they will achieve the goals. The US Dept of Energy has created a [\\$10M competitive grant fund](#) which could be used to implement the siting recommendations, and should be sought.

### Promotora Perspectives: Clean Energy

I've been a resident of Baltimore County for the past 3 years. I'm a proud mother of two children who currently attend Baltimore County Public Schools. I recently joined [Maryland LCV's] Chispa MD program as a Promotora of Environmental Justice, advocating for 100% clean energy in Maryland, a move that will greatly benefit the health of our kids and our community as a whole. Transitioning to 100% clean energy holds the promise of clean air, clean water, and clean land for our communities. What's even more significant is the positive impact it will have on our overall health. Additionally, I support a move to 100% clean energy because this transition will generate numerous new job opportunities.

- Veronica, Baltimore County

I have lived in Montgomery County for 28 years and am a proud Promotora of Environmental Justice with CHISPA Maryland, a program of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters. Members of my community care deeply about the environment, and are active in climate solutions because we know the benefits to our health and our children's health. But the state can do more to help and include the Latino community in the transition to clean energy and electricity. We have questions like, "How reliable are solar panels? How do we apply for solar panels? What can we do so families who live in apartments or are renters like myself do to have clean energy in our homes?" What we need is better outreach and education to our communities about clean energy IN our communities.

- Maria, Montgomery County

### Equity and Environmental Justice

Maryland's clean energy future is an opportunity to invest in communities who have been left behind as a result of systemic racism and disinvestment. If crafted through an equity lens, clean energy policies can undo some of the harm that environmental policies have done in the past, placing undue burden on low income communities and communities of color. As Maryland works to reduce GHG emissions by 60% from the 2006 baseline over the next eight years, it must ensure that historically under-resourced and overburdened communities disproportionately impacted by climate change are at the forefront in receiving the maximum benefits available in this clean energy transition. Maryland needs to firmly commit at least 40% of all funds are directed to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

1. State investments to incentivize clean energy must be more equitably allocated. Consider applying creative solutions such as the state procurement of OSW energy as proposed in the POWER Act across other clean energy solutions, as well as exploring programs such as percentage of income payment programs for energy bills.



2. Full implementation of Maryland’s now permanent community solar program needs to quickly establish consolidated billing regulations, making community solar a viable option for those on energy assistance. Further multilingual community outreach and engagement on the benefits and sign up process for community solar will also help reach state goals of clean energy and equity.
3. Support communities living near retired or retiring fossil plants in installing renewable energy supporting industries and storage by taking advantage of “energy community” IRA tax credits.
4. Consider ratepayer protections, such as percent of income payment programs, setting an energy affordability standard (EAS), and/or a no-shut offs policy.
5. For projects 1 MW and greater, require prevailing wage and apprenticeship standards on clean energy projects, ensuring pathways to family sustaining careers in underserved and marginalized communities.

#### Promotora Perspectives: Environmental Justice & Accessibility

I've been a resident of Wheaton, Maryland for the past two decades. As a Promotora of Environmental Justice with [Maryland LCV's] Chispa Maryland program, I'm dedicated to making a difference in my community. The reason I joined Chispa is because I observed a significant lack of environmental education in our community, particularly in the realm of environmental justice. My mission with Chispa Maryland is to advocate for our Latino communities, ensuring that environmental documents are accessible in their native language. It's crucial that they have access to information about clean energy and solar panels in a way that they can fully understand and engage with. Together, we can make strides toward a more inclusive and sustainable future.

- Norma, Montgomery County

## Transmission, Storage, and Interconnection

Key to a clean energy future are interconnection and transmission enhancements and ample storage. The Pathway report does not provide enough guidance on these critical topics where the state should be investing significant resources.

### Transmission

1. Maryland should increase staffing and resources dedicated specifically to addressing transmission planning and implementation, both within Maryland and in coordination with neighboring states. This could be achieved by creating an “Office of Transmission, Interconnection & Siting” as an independent agency.
2. Maryland should incorporate Grid Enhancing Technologies (GETs) in transmission planning processes, as GETs allow for Maryland to get more out of *existing* transmission systems, improving the reliability of the grid by increasing capacity and flexibility, and allowing for better integration of renewable sources.

### Interconnection

3. Work with PJM and the Maryland PSC to rapidly address the interconnection queue backlog and interconnection delays.
4. Ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that solar projects currently in the interconnection queue are approved, and streamline siting and permitting for accelerated deployment.

### Storage

5. Support the PSC as it takes steps to establish storage targets and builds the Maryland Energy Storage Program.
  - a. Develop and deploy storage consistent with and supportive of the state goal of achieving 100% clean energy.
6. Explore legislative avenues to develop safety and siting standards, model fire codes, and community engagement requirements for new battery storage and H2Hub facilities.

## Energy Efficiency

1. The state’s energy efficiency program, EmPOWER, has saved Marylanders energy and money via their electricity bills. But, it has not served low income Marylanders the way that it could or should. Additionally, the program’s current accounting system through electricity savings is not aligned with the state’s GHG emissions reduction targets. The cleanest form of energy is energy we don’t use. Therefore, the state should
  - a. Prioritize investments via EmPOWER in low income households.
  - b. Reform the state’s EmPOWER program to align it with greenhouse gas emission reduction goals

## Clean Transportation

In order to confront the growing threat of climate change, and achieve 60% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2031, Maryland needs to take bold action to combat pollution from the transportation sector, the state's largest greenhouse gas. Tailpipe emissions from vehicles release significant carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides, exacerbating climate change and local air pollution. Communities of color, low-wealth communities, and communities living near busy roads, highways, and warehouses bear an especially unfair burden of harmful air pollution due to decades of systematic marginalization.

### 1. Vehicle Electrification

- a. This year Maryland has taken several significant steps towards transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs). Among them, MDE recently adopted Advanced Clean Cars II Standards, aiming for all new passenger vehicles in Maryland to be zero-emission or hybrid by 2035. The state is also currently considering adopting the Clean Trucks Act of 2023 (SB224) to boost zero-emission truck and school bus sales from 2027 to 2035. As the pace of electric vehicle adoption increases in Maryland, the state should plan for this transition by 1) supporting a cleaner electricity grid and expansion of an equitable charging infrastructure, 2) providing funding incentives to support electric vehicle adoption, and 3) supporting equitable access to electric vehicles.
  - i. Adopt regulations to support this transition to ZEV including:
    1. Advanced Clean Trucks Rule to increase the sales of Zero-emission trucks and school buses
    2. Advanced Clean Fleets Rule to require fleets to adopt an increasing percentage of zero-emissions vehicles.
    3. Heavy-Duty Omnibus Regulation (Low-Nox Rule) to reduce air pollution from diesel trucks and buses
  - ii. Support the deployment of a robust and equitable charging infrastructure system, including programs that support electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE), and EV-ready buildings,
  - iii. Provide technical support and financial incentives to facilitate the transition of MDOT's bus fleet to zero-emissions, and the 2023 Climate Solutions Now Act's 2025 electric school bus mandate.
  - iv. Ensure more participation in the electric school bus pilot program under the Climate Solutions Now Act.



### Promotora Perspectives: Electric Buses

I have lived in Baltimore City for the past 16 years. I'm a mother of two kids who attend Baltimore City Schools. One of them suffers from asthma and autism. I'm also a Promotora of Environmental Justice with CHISPA Maryland, a program of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters. We are active in our communities on the environment and climate solutions because we know the benefits to our health and our children's health. As a mother of two students in Baltimore City, I know that a lot of students use public transportation to get to and from school who I know personally suffer from asthma. When Baltimore City invests more money in public transportation, they should prioritize electric buses for the city routes they know serve the schools. This will be a big help to our kids' respiratory problems if they prioritize having electric public transportation buses.

- Marta, Baltimore City

I have lived in Prince George's County for the past 16 years. I'm a mother of a 12 year old boy who suffers from asthma who attends a public school and rides a diesel school bus. Because of this I decided to join [Maryland LCV's] CHISPA Maryland program and become a Promotora of Environmental Justice. I am proud to be supporting the health of our communities and our families. I became involved in environmental advocacy through Chispa Maryland by participating in the Clean Buses for Healthy Kids campaign. Our Clean Bus Campaign fights to improve not only the air our children and communities breathe. But also the air bus drivers, teachers, and mechanics breathe. In Maryland, if you are a person of color, chances are the air you breathe is more polluted than the air a white person breathes. Our communities are disproportionately exposed to air pollution from the use of diesel and other fossil fuels that harm our climate. We need clean air to improve the health of our children and the quality of life in our communities. There is no need to continue polluting the air we breathe. We need electric school buses now. That's why I am asking for your to ensure that there will be funds available for school districts to apply to transition their school buses fleet into electric school buses.

- Adriana, Prince George's County

### All of Society Approach

The 2009 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act (GGRA) prohibits the state from requiring greenhouse gas emissions reductions from the state's manufacturing sector or causing a significant increase in costs to the state's manufacturing sector. The GGRA required an independent study of this exemption, which was completed in 2022 by the University of Maryland.



They concluded that “reducing emissions from the manufacturing sector not only offers economic opportunities but also solidifies Maryland’s position as a climate leader. By including the manufacturing sector in state climate targets and regulations, and taking advantage of federal support, policymakers can facilitate the sector’s low-carbon transition through market- and non-market-based policy mechanisms.” Maryland’s Climate Pathway report shows that reducing emissions from the manufacturing sector is critical for achieving the state’s emissions reduction goals.

1. Support a repeal of the provisions GGRA 2009 that exempt the manufacturing sector from greenhouse gas emissions reduction requirements.

### **Water and Natural Resource Considerations**

Natural resources represent an important opportunity for implementing climate solutions, especially for the state’s net zero by 2045 goal. Climate solutions that invest in natural resources also provide various co-benefits that extend beyond reducing emissions, including improved resilience to climate impacts, myriad health benefits to communities, strengthening local economies, and safeguarding critical ecosystems (both in public and private lands).

1. Following through on goals for climate action in line with policies and practices outlined in the Pathway Report will have added co-benefits for clean water, including a reduction of nutrient loading as the result of deposition from air pollutants to surface waters.
2. In addition to goals for reducing emissions, Maryland has also set a statewide goal for a 40% land preservation by 2040. As noted in the report, forests are a natural carbon sink. Therefore, prioritizing the preservation of existing forests would support Maryland’s goal for land preservation while also providing the ongoing mitigation of GHGs necessary to maintain emissions reductions.
3. Similarly, adding forests through reforestation and afforestation are important, cost-effective means for further reducing emissions while achieving co-benefits of water and air quality trees and forests offer.
4. Living shorelines and wetlands, both conserving existing and restoring lost Wetlands would be another means of supporting both the goal of carbon sequestration while also supporting clean water and essential ecosystems for wildlife.
5. Where agricultural operations exist in Maryland, ensuring farmers have the tools and resources necessary to implement climate smart agricultural practices will provide both an additional means of carbon sequestration while simultaneously sustaining an economically important industry and delivering co-benefits for water quality. Currently the opportunity exists to implement more climate smart agriculture with additional federal funding.