

Week of February 27, 2024 **HOTLIST**

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters is pleased to present the "Hot List" – a detailed list of priority environmental legislation moving through the Maryland General Assembly. This will be emailed to every legislator every Tuesday and will also be available online on our website (www.mdclv.org). We hope you find this weekly communication helpful and instructive as you tackle important environmental bills this session. All votes on bills listed on the Hotlist may be considered for inclusion in our annual legislative scorecard, along with any bills where we communicate our position formally to a full legislative body in advance of Floor voting sessions. If you have any questions, or would like us to consider adding a bill to the Hot List, please contact Kristen Harbeson at kharbeson@mdclv.org or 410-952-8100.



Appropriations (APP)

HB 0836/SB 0681: Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects - Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)

Sponsors:	Mark Edelson
Committees:	Appropriations (H)
Summary:	This bill requires all transportation projects costing greater than \$10 Million to conduct an impact assessment to measure any increase in greenhouse gas emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) stemming from the project and develop and implement mitigation plans to eliminate the net increases, focusing especially on overburdened and underserved communities impacted by the project.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Feb 09, 2024 - Hearing 3/06 at 1:00 p.m. (Appropriations)

Education, Energy, and the Environment (EEE)

SB 0146/HB 0166: Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024)

Sponsors:	Karen Lewis Young
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	This bill removes trash incineration as a qualifying source from the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard. The byproducts of burning trash for energy include nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, dioxins, and volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), which are harmful to human health and most impact residents living near trash incinerators. State dollars and incentives should not go towards polluting or harmful industries, that cost Marylanders their health and quality of life.

Our Position:	Support
Status:	Jan 25, 2024 - Hearing 1/25 at 1:30 p.m.

SB 0480/HB 0585:Protecting Election Officials Act of 2024

Sponsors:	The President (By Request - Administration)
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	This bill provides protection against threats and harm to election officials or their families because of their role in administering elections, and assigns a fine of up to \$2500 for violations. Strong environmental laws require free and fair elections, which can not take place where election officials are dissuaded from the position by threatening behavior.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Jan 25, 2024 - Hearing 2/21 at 1:00 p.m.

SB 0548/HB 0731:Natural Gas - Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement (Ratepayer Protection Act)

Sponsors:	Charles E. Sydnor
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	This bill directs funds spent through the Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement (STRIDE) program to prioritize the safety of the gas system and provide consistency with state climate policy.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Jan 26, 2024 - Hearing 2/15 at 1:00 p.m.

SB 0570/HB 0397:Public Utilities - Thermal Energy Network Systems - Authorization and Establishment (Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act)

Sponsors:	Katie Fry Hester
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	This bill launches a pilot program for networked geothermal systems in neighborhoods with 80% low-and-moderate income residence, prioritizing overburdened and underserved communities. Networked Geothermal creates opportunities for whole communities to benefit from electrification through a single geothermal system, which would connect to heat pumps in individual homes.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Feb 06, 2024 - Hearing 2/29 at 1:00 p.m.

SB 0653/HB 1101: Standing - Environmental and Natural Resources Protection Proceedings (Clean Water Justice Act of 2024)

Sponsors:	Malcolm Augustine
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	Prior to Sackett v. EPA in 2023, citizens were able to enforce clean water laws in federal court, however that U.S. Supreme Court ruling removed many waterways from federal protections. While Maryland state laws include protections for more waterways than federal law now, Maryland citizens do not have the same access to the state court as they have to federal court. This bill would provide a new right for impacted communities to enforce laws against water pollution in state court the same way they were previously able to in federal court.
Our Position:	Support - Environmental Community Priority
Status:	Feb 07, 2024 - Hearing 2/27 at 1:00 p.m.

SB 0783/HB 1435: Renewable Energy – Net Energy Metering Aggregation, Solar Renewable Energy Credits, and Taxes on Solar Energy Generating Systems (Brighter Tomorrow Act)

Sponsors:	Sarah K. Elfreth
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	This bill codifies recommendations made by the Solar Incentives Workgroup including: 1) Extension of a personal property tax exemption for <2MW community solar projects on already developed land or using agrovoltatics, and serving at least 50% LMI households; 2) Creation of a personal property tax exemption for non-residential rooftop and parking canopies, and offering jurisdictions authority to offer additional real property tax abatements for parking canopies; 3) Creating a consistent across-the-board Payment In Lieu of Taxes structure for ground mounted solar installations; 4) Raises the Aggregate Net Meter cap from 2-5MW,; 5) Creates a short-term SREC multiplier for certain projects as a bridge to long term structural reforms of the SREC system.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV Priority
Status:	Feb 06, 2024 - Hearing 2/29 at 1:00 p.m. (Education, Energy, and the Environment)

SB 0969/HB 1165: Stream and Watershed Restoration – Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)

Sponsors:	Sarah K. Elfreth
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)

Summary:	This bill aims to address a lack of meaningful outcomes as a result of piecemeal restoration projects by piloting a program in five watersheds to manage a more comprehensive, whole-system approach to ecosystem restoration. Through the prioritized funding, a management board representing state agencies, relevant local jurisdictions, and community members to plan and oversee restoration projects within a given watershed, and with an emphasis on practices that provide co-benefits, not just improved water quality. Additionally the bill establishes a certification program for stream restoration professionals.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV & Environmental Community Priority
Status:	Feb 09, 2024 - Hearing 3/05 at 1:00 p.m.

Economic Matters (ECM)

HB 0166/SB 0146: Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Eligible Sources - Alterations (Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2024)

Sponsors:	Vaughn Stewart
Committees:	Economic Matters (H)
Summary:	This bill removes trash incineration as a qualifying source from the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard. The byproducts of burning trash for energy include nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, dioxins, and volatile organic chemicals (VOCs), which are harmful to human health and most impact residents living near trash incinerators. State dollars and incentives should not go towards polluting or harmful industries, that cost Marylanders their health and quality of life.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Feb 09, 2024 - Hearing 3/07 at 1:00 p.m.

HB 0397/SB 0570: Public Utilities – Thermal Energy Network Systems – Authorization and Establishment (Working for Accessible Renewable Maryland Thermal Heat (WARMTH) Act)

Sponsors:	Lorig Charkoudian
Committees:	Economic Matters (H)
Summary:	This bill launches a pilot program for networked geothermal systems in neighborhoods with 80% low-and-moderate income residence, prioritizing overburdened and underserved communities. Networked Geothermal creates opportunities for whole communities to benefit from electrification through a single geothermal system, which would connect to heat pumps in individual homes.
Our Position:	Support

Status:	Feb 01, 2024 - Hearing 2/22 at 1:00 p.m.
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HB 0731/SB 0548: Natural Gas - Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement (Ratepayer Protection Act)

Sponsors:	Elizabeth Embry
Committees:	Economic Matters (H)
Summary:	This bill directs funds spent through the Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement (STRIDE) program to prioritize the safety of the gas system and provide consistency with state climate policy.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Feb 02, 2024 - Hearing 2/29 at 1:00 p.m.

HB 0864/: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plans

Sponsors:	Brian M. Crosby
Committees:	Economic Matters (H)
Summary:	This bill builds on the success of EmPOWER Maryland by continuing the program's effective focus on weatherization and rebates for efficient electric appliances and home heating, aligns the program with the state's climate goals, and adds essential consumer safeguards. Key components of the bill include enabling fuel switching through EmPOWER funds, and changing the accounting of the program to greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Energy efficiency is one of the most cost effective ways to decrease greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change, while reducing utility bills.
Our Position:	Support - Environmental Community Priority
Status:	Feb 02, 2024 - Hearing 2/29 at 1:00 p.m.

HB 1435/SB 0783: Renewable Energy - Net Energy Metering Aggregation, Solar Renewable Energy Credits, and Taxes on Solar Energy Generating Systems (Brighter Tomorrow Act)

Sponsors:	David Fraser-Hidalgo
Committees:	Economic Matters (H)
Summary:	This bill codifies recommendations made by the Solar Incentives Workgroup including: 1) Extension of a personal property tax exemption for <2MW community solar projects on already developed land or using agrovoltatics, and serving at least 50% LMI households; 2) Creation of a personal property tax exemption for non-residential rooftop and parking canopies, and offering jurisdictions authority to offer additional real property tax abatements for parking canopies; 3) Creating a consistent across-the-board Payment In Lieu of Taxes structure for ground mounted solar installations; 4) Raises the Aggregate Net Meter cap from 2-5MW.; 5) Creates a short-term SREC multiplier for certain projects as a bridge to long term structural reforms of the SREC

	system.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV Priority
Status:	Feb 09, 2024 - Hearing 3/07 at 1:00 p.m.

Environment and Transportation (ENT)

HB 0449/SB 0148: Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program - Funding for Underserved and Overburdened Communities

Sponsors:	Julian Ivey
Committees:	Environment and Transportation (H)
Summary:	This bill increases the funding to the Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program, and requires at least 40% of the funding go to projects in or that directly benefit overburdened or underserved communities.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV, Environmental Community & Climate Plan Priority
Status:	Feb 01, 2024 - Hearing 2/22 at 1:00 p.m. (Environment and Transportation)

HB 0990/: Environment - Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions - Manufacturers

Sponsors:	Dana Stein
Committees:	Environment and Transportation (H)
Summary:	The 2009 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) required Maryland to reduce state-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 25% by 2020 using 2006 as a baseline while ensuring a positive impact on Maryland's economy. According to the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL), Maryland is currently the only state to exempt manufacturers from meeting GHG emissions goals. The removal of this exemption was recommended by the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and is one of the six legislative actions recommended in the Climate Plan.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV & Climate Plan Priority
Status:	Feb 09, 2024 - Hearing 3/01 at 1:00 p.m. (Environment and Transportation)

HB 1008/: Fossil Fuel Transportation Fee and Mitigation Fund (Climate Pollution Reduction Fund Act)

Sponsors:	Dana Stein
Committees:	Environment and Transportation (H)
Summary:	Maryland's Department of the Environment requires any person transferring non-edible oils into Maryland obtain an Oil Transfer License. A fee per barrel fee is assessed at the first point of transfer and paid quarterly, supporting state oil control and spill response activity. The proposed bill would expand

	this fee to be levied against all fossil fuels entering the state, unless they will be traveling immediately outside of the state, or is used exclusively for use on a farm.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV & Climate Plan Priority
Status:	Feb 09, 2024 - Hearing 3/01 at 1:00 p.m. (Environment and Transportation)

HB 1101/SB 0653: Standing - Environmental and Natural Resources Protection Proceedings (Clean Water Justice Act of 2024)

Sponsors:	Sara Love
Committees:	Environment and Transportation (H)
Summary:	Prior to Sackett v. EPA in 2023, citizens were able to enforce clean water laws in federal court, however that U.S. Supreme Court ruling removed many waterways from federal protections. While Maryland state laws include protections for more waterways than federal law now, Maryland citizens do not have the same access to the state court as they have to federal court. This bill would provide a new right for impacted communities to enforce laws against water pollution in state court the same way they were previously able to in federal court.
Our Position:	Support - Environmental Community Priority
Status:	Feb 08, 2024 - Hearing 3/01 at 1:00 p.m.

HB 1165/SB 0969: Stream and Watershed Restoration - Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)

Sponsors:	Sara Love
Committees:	Environment and Transportation (H)
Summary:	This bill aims to address a lack of meaningful outcomes as a result of piecemeal restoration projects by piloting a program in five watersheds to manage a more comprehensive, whole-system approach to ecosystem restoration. Through the prioritized funding, a management board representing state agencies, relevant local jurisdictions, and community members to plan and oversee restoration projects within a given watershed, and with an emphasis on practices that provide co-benefits, not just improved water quality. Additionally the bill establishes a certification program for stream restoration professionals.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV & Environmental Community Priority
Status:	Feb 08, 2024 - Hearing 3/01 at 1:00 p.m.

SB 0681/HB 0836: Major Highway Capacity Expansion Projects - Impact Assessments and Mitigation Plans (Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2024)

Sponsors:	Clarence K. Lam
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Committees:	Finance (S)
Summary:	This bill requires all transportation projects costing greater than \$10 Million to conduct an impact assessment to measure any increase in greenhouse gas emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) stemming from the project and develop and implement mitigation plans to eliminate the net increases, focusing especially on overburdened and underserved communities impacted by the project.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Feb 02, 2024 - Hearing 2/28 at 1:00 p.m. (Finance)

SB 0148/HB 0449: Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program - Funding for Underserved and Overburdened Communities

Sponsors:	Alonzo T. Washington
Committees:	Education, Energy, and the Environment (S)
Summary:	This bill increases the funding to the Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program, and requires at least 40% of the funding go to projects in or that directly benefit overburdened or underserved communities.
Our Position:	Support - Maryland LCV, Environmental Community & Climate Plan Priority
Status:	Feb 27, 2024 - Second Reading Passed with Amendments

HB 0585/SB 0480: Protecting Election Officials Act of 2024

Sponsors:	The Speaker (By Request - Administration)
Committees:	Judiciary (H)
Summary:	This bill provides protection against threats and harm to election officials or their families because of their role in administering elections, and assigns a fine of up to \$2500 for violations. Strong environmental laws require free and fair elections, which can not take place where election officials are dissuaded from the position by threatening behavior.
Our Position:	Support
Status:	Jan 24, 2024 - Hearing 2/06 at 1:00 p.m.