

Dear Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo,

Thank you for your support and leadership on HB0583 - Climate Solutions Now. The bill is critical to helping the State address climate change and will provide a huge boost to Montgomery County in moving it towards the ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals of 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035 and carrying out our CAP.

The real strengths of the bill are that it will provide additional funds to support County actions and will require substantial efficiency gains for existing and new buildings (buildings constitute 40 % of the GHG emissions in the County). Energy efficiency for buildings is extremely important because as we electrify buildings and transportation, more electricity will be required which can be offset by energy efficiency gains in buildings. We urge you to support HB583 in Committee and to oppose any weakening amendments.

Here are some of the specific ways HB0583 complements and supports Montgomery County's climate change efforts and our Climate Action Plan.

Greenhouse Gas Reduction

- Increasing the State GHG reduction goals to 60% by 2030 and net zero by 2045, thereby narrowing the gap between County and State goals.

Buildings

- Providing loans for net zero school buildings from the State Strategic Energy Investment Fund which can help electrify County schools.
- Increasing State EMPOWER energy efficiency requirements from 2 % to 2.7 % every year, which will provide more funding for County building energy efficiency improvements.
- Strengthening requirements for buildings to be more efficient, including buildings that receive state funding, new buildings more than 20,000 sq. ft. of roof being solar ready, and 40% energy use reduction for renovation of commercial or residential buildings greater than 25,000 sq. ft., and allowing local jurisdictions to enact stronger efficiency standards.

Transportation

- Providing funding from the State Transportation Trust Fund for zero emission public transit buses.

Solar Energy

- Providing a personal property tax exemption for community solar projects located on rooftops, parking lots, or brownfields that primarily benefit low-income households, thereby incentivizing community solar in the County.

Trees

- Providing funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund for ambitious tree planting with a carve-out for urban areas that can help with County carbon sequestration and heat adaptation goals.

Environmental Justice

- Supporting environmental justice and economic goals by requiring the Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to identify communities disproportionately impacted by climate change and to set a percentage of state climate funds that must be spent in those communities, and by creating a new

Work Group to make policy recommendations for how to best serve transitioning fossil fuel workers in Maryland.

Again, thank you for your support for Climate Solutions Now and for addressing the issue of Climate Change in our County. I am proud to be living in this county, where we are making a serious effort at addressing Climate Change.

With respect,

Joyce Bailey

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