



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 11, 2021

Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21041

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of HB 583: Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee,

I commend you and Del. Stein for your leadership in the fight for creating a clean, resilient and sustainable environment with introduction of HB 583, the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021.

Two years ago, my Administration committed to the “*We Are Still In*” initiative. In doing so, we declared that we support climate actions proposed by the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, of which the Biden Administration recently rejoined. Howard County remains committed to even more ambitious targets for decreasing emissions and further protecting our environment:

- Howard County will reduce greenhouse gas emissions of County government operations 45 percent below 2010 levels by the year 2030 with the goal of reaching zero emissions by 2050.
- By 2024, Howard County will receive 20 percent of its power for local government operations from renewable sources. We have begun implementing a power purchase agreement that will surpass this goal – by getting nearly 30% of our power from solar arrays built on Howard County government property and elsewhere throughout the county.
- By 2024, we aim reduce petroleum fuel consumption in its fleet by 20 percent.
- By 2024, we will reduce energy use in County facilities by 25 percent, well beyond the required 15 percent reduction. This effort will make Howard County a regional leader and the first to exceed state requirements.

Since taking office, my Administration proposed the strongest forest conservation law in the State to mitigate the loss of natural lands. We planted more than 50,000 trees through a \$1 million National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant and preserved a 5-acre, state-designated targeted ecological area in Savage as open space.



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We broke ground on four new garden plots within the Long Reach Garden, the first community garden expansion in over a decade. Howard County also added 58 hybrid vehicles to the central fleet to help meet its fuel consumption goals.

My Administration will continue to do our part to fight climate change and now, the United States will once again be a global leader at the front by reentering the Paris Agreement. However, our efforts will fall short unless the state also takes an active role. This bill is an ambitious and necessary commitment to engage at all levels in the fight against climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical piece of legislation and for your continued commitment to help lead the fight for climate change and environmental preservation resiliency. I urge a favorable committee report of HB 583.

All the Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Ball', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive