

HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY
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Joshua Feldmark, Director
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Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT**: HB 0171: Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leah Miller and I manage Howard County's climate and energy programs. The most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, called *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, documents that droughts, floods, extreme heat, and other climate change impacts already are causing widespread disruption in every region of the world. The report further warns that even more devastating impacts are inevitable unless greenhouse gas emissions are cut in half and significant adaptation measures are implemented within the next decade.

As the climate continues to change, Howard County anticipates more extreme weather, flooding, heat waves, and other adverse effects of climate change will increasingly impact all its residents and businesses. To address these impacts, Howard County is developing a new Climate Action Plan that will focus not only on further reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon storage, but also on adaptation, resiliency, and emergency preparedness actions. New funding will be needed to implement these priority actions to improve public safety, increase resiliency, and protect our most vulnerable populations from severe weather and other climate impacts.

The Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act establishes a much-needed infrastructure fund that will make it possible for counties and municipalities to implement the actions needed to protect our communities from the worst climate change impacts. At least 50 percent of this infrastructure fund will be dedicated to benefit vulnerable environmental justice communities that have the greatest need for resilience and adaptation measures. Funds also will be available to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to help more communities develop comprehensive climate action plans to prioritize where funds and actions are most needed.

Maryland and its local governments have a responsibility to protect our citizens, especially our most vulnerable populations, from severe storms, flooding, extreme heat, and other potentially devastating impacts of climate change. I welcome your partnership and urge a favorable report on House Bill 0171.

Leah Miller
Energy Manager
Howard County Office of Community Sustainability