

Climate Solutions 2022 Legislative Agenda

To meet the urgency of climate change, the Maryland General Assembly must pass the proposed “Climate Solutions 2022” legislative agenda to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, electrify our buildings and vehicles, and invest in climate justice!

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) recommend our society achieve greenhouse gas net neutrality by mid-century.¹ To do this, we need a plan to reach those goals in Maryland while supporting our workforce and most vulnerable communities. This agenda is captured in one bill in the Senate (SB528) and multiple bills in the House.

Updating our GHG Reduction Plan (SB528/HB708)

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2016 calls for a reduction of emissions of 40% by 2030 (from 2006 levels). Unfortunately, the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued in August of 2021, has declared a “code red for humanity” due to rapidly worsening climate change, warranting more ambitious goals.² [SB528](#) and [HB708](#) set a goal of 60% reductions by 2032, in order to reach net neutrality by 2045. This policy also updates our greenhouse gas accounting practices to ensure that we are using the most up-to-date science and technology to accurately measure methane, a very potent and harmful greenhouse gas.

Building Climate Equity

Climate change does not impact everyone equally. Communities of color and low-income communities have been disproportionately impacted by the negative impacts of the fossil fuel industry and will feel climate change first and hardest. We must ensure that climate solutions reach these communities first.

[SB528/HB708](#) invest in Climate Justice by:

- Directing the Maryland Dept. of the Environment (MDE) to work in consultation with the **Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities** to study cumulative impacts and define/identify communities disproportionately affected by climate change. MDE will also establish strategies to address environmental justice and advance climate equity.
- Creating a **Climate Justice Corp** to assist the state in achieving GHG targets by providing young adults with opportunities to become better citizens, students, and workers through service to communities and training for “green-collar” jobs. These jobs could include clean energy projects, climate mitigation projects, or holistic retrofits of low-income households.
- Establishing a **Just Transition Employment and Retraining Working Group** to convene labor, legislators, the Secretary of Labor’s office, climate groups, and renewable energy

companies to make policy recommendations for how to best serve fossil fuel workers in Maryland.

- Establishing the **Climate Catalytic Capital Fund** (administered by the Maryland Clean Energy Center) to support projects to reduce GHG emissions in overburdened communities, including transportation electrification, building electrification, weatherization for LMI households, and the creation of a Maryland Green Bond Program ([SB528](#)).

Electrifying our buildings and reducing their emissions

Buildings emit 40% of Maryland's greenhouse gasses (13% of which are direct emissions) and account for 90% of Maryland's electricity use.³ The Climate Solutions 2022 legislative agenda addresses this by:

- Requiring space and water heating needs in new construction of state ([HB806/SB528](#)) and residential and commercial ([HB831/SB528](#)) buildings to be met with **all-electric systems starting in 2023**.
- Creating a **Building Emissions Performance Standard** for buildings 25,000 sq. ft and larger to reduce emissions from state-owned buildings to net-zero by 2035 ([HB806/SB528](#)) and privately-owned buildings to net-zero by 2040 ([HB831/SB528](#)).
- Establishing a **Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force** to study and make recommendations regarding the reduction of GHG emissions from buildings and retrofits of existing buildings ([HB831/SB528](#))

Electrifying our state-owned vehicles

According to the State of Maryland 2017 Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory, transportation is the top-emitting sector.³ It is crucial that the state lead by example and **transition our state fleet to zero-emission vehicles (ZEV)**. This legislative agenda begins that process by requiring that a portion of the passenger cars and light-duty vehicles purchased for the state fleet be ZEV starting with passenger cars in the fiscal year 2023 and reaching 100% of all light-duty vehicles by 2033 ([SB528/HB94](#)).

To avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change, we must cut emissions economy-wide and reach net-zero by 2045. We must invest in the communities burdened by dirty energy systems. We must pass bold climate solutions!

Works Cited

1. IPCC, 2021: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S.L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M.I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J.B.R. Matthews, T.K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu, and B. Zhou (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. In Press.
2. Md. Comm'n on Climate Change, Building Energy Transition Plan.
3. *State of Maryland 2017 Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory*, Air and Radiation Administration Air Quality Policy & Planning Division. Maryland Department of the Environment, 2017.
4. *State of Maryland 2017 Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory*, Air and Radiation Administration Air Quality Policy & Planning Division. Maryland Department of the Environment, 2017.

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