

Strengthening the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act in 2020

Aligning Maryland's Emissions Reduction Requirements With the Latest Climate Science

Since the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) was reauthorized in 2016, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), made up of the leading climate scientists in the world, has released new recommendations for policymakers. The following changes to the GGRA will update our targets and bring them into alignment with IPCC:

1. Increase our 2030 emissions reduction goal from 40% to 60% based on 2006 levels.
2. Set 2045 as the deadline by which the state economy will reach net zero emissions.

Improving the Maryland Department of Environment Climate Action Plan

The GGRA tasks the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) with developing a climate action plan to meet the emissions reduction requirements. After missing this reporting deadline by more than nine months, MDE released a plan that claims to meet the current 2030 target based on several questionable methodological assumptions. Since the emissions reduction targets will be adjusted, the 2020 GGRA bill will require MDE to redevelop their plan with a few changes:

1. MDE will be prohibited from claiming emissions reductions from the widening of highways. Research has been clear that adding lanes of highway leads to induced demand, encouraging more cars on the road and increasing vehicle-based emissions.
2. MDE will have to use a 20-year timeframe for calculating methane emissions instead of a 100-year timeframe. Methane is a relatively short-lived pollutant and gets undercounted unless measured over twenty years.
3. MDE will be required to use the "best available scientific information" to ensure it uses the most recent and credible scientific rationale for calculating its emissions inventory and making methodology assumptions.

Investing in Frontline and Disadvantaged Communities

While environmental justice is mentioned in MDE's climate plan, there is a lot more the state could do to ensure investments to reduce emissions are benefitting the communities hardest hit by climate change, frontline pollution, and historic discrimination. This bill will require MDE to create a Climate Justice Workgroup, made up largely of environmental justice representatives, to identify frontline and disadvantaged communities and study whether they receive an equitable portion of climate investment.

Putting Workers First in Climate Action

Reducing our greenhouse gas pollution will require both changes in clean energy employment and provide opportunities for new job creation in public transit construction and operation, the

electric vehicle industry, retrofitting of buildings, and other climate actions. If we make this transition the right way, we can provide a huge boost to the economy and help even the playing field for workers. This bill will create a Climate Jobs task force, bringing union leaders, legislators, industry representatives, and climate advocates to the table to develop a pro-worker climate plan.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Pollution Now

The days of focusing on goal-setting and planning, but not also acting, are over. Climate change is here and we have just the next decade left to implement major changes to the way we consume energy, travel from place to place, heat and cool our buildings, and more.

1. **Energy Efficiency:** The bill will increase our electricity efficiency requirements from 2% annual rate savings to 3%, moving Maryland to the top of the country.
2. **Electrifying State Vehicles:** The bill will require 50% of state buses and 100% of the state's light duty fleet to be Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV) by 2030.
3. **Zero Emissions Public Buildings:** The bill will require all new buildings with at least 25% of their funding coming from the state to meet net zero emissions building standards.
4. **Plant One Million Trees:** To aid carbon sequestration, the bill will require the state to plant one million additional trees every year for the next ten years.
5. **Rooftop Solar:** The bill will require all new buildings with at least 20,000 square feet of roof space to install rooftop solar.
6. **Climate Test:** The bill will require all state agencies to consider the climate impact of their decisions.

TAKE ACTION:

Interested in working with CCAN Action Fund on strengthening the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act? Contact our Maryland Director, Steven Hershkowitz: steven@chesapeakeclimate.org or (310) 941-7886.