CLIMATE

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared For:
Moore-Miller Climate & Environment Policy Committee
December 2022

PREPARED BY:

2023 PROJECT

SIERRA CLUB
MARYLAND CHAPTER

MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

ENVIRONMENT MARYLAND
Clean air. Clean water. Open spaces.

MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE COALITION

Maryland PIRG

AIA Maryland

The Climate Reality Project®
GREATER MARYLAND CHAPTER

HoCo Climate Action

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INTERFAITH Power & Light
Our religious response to climate change.

Indivisible HoCo MD

UMD STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SGA SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

Climate Partners, a group of Maryland climate stakeholders, met to identify strategic policies and actions to assist the Moore-Miller Administration and the state of Maryland in meeting its climate goals and becoming a national leader in state-level climate action. The recommendations focus on building and expanding the generation of renewable energy, strengthening our electric infrastructure, considering climate impacts in agency decision making, and addressing environmental racism. The workgroup included representatives of nonprofits, policy experts on renewable energy, and grassroots advocates. Among their key topics of discussion were climate resilience, expansion of renewable energy including offshore wind and community solar, implementing Justice40 policies throughout state agencies, pursuance of federal funding, and creating strong agency infrastructure to fully implement and adequately enforce these policies and programs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Addressing climate change will require a "whole-government" approach beginning with an administration-wide vision and cross-agency coordination. Maryland has taken important legislative steps in recent years, but implementation remains crucial. Maryland's state agencies will be the key to successful climate mitigation strategies, climate resilience, reducing energy burdens, transitioning to renewable energy, reducing emissions, and utilizing federal funding. Agency responsibilities include:

- ➔ Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
  - ◆ Implementing the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA,) including writing Maryland's climate action plan, which is critical for meeting the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goal of 60% by 2031 and net zero emissions by 2045.
  - ◆ Centering environmental justice and overburdened and underserved communities in all climate related decision making.
  - ◆ Expanding and improving Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio.
- ➔ Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
  - ◆ Utilizing and distributing federal funds to lower emissions from the transportation sector and build the energy infrastructure needed to support an electrified transportation system.
  - ◆ Improving Maryland's public transportation system to reduce vehicle miles traveled while providing low to zero emission public transportation services.
- ➔ Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC)

- Promoting grid decarbonization, including by approving new renewable generation sources, energy efficiency measures, and widespread electrification.
- Directing and approving utility investments in transportation electrification – such as federal funding for highway charging infrastructure and electric transit and school buses.
- Overseeing elements of building electrification and the wind-down of gas utilities and gas appliances.
- Reducing the energy burdens borne by low- and middle-income Marylanders.

➔ Maryland Energy Administration (MEA)

- Distributing federal funds, including funds for building electrification, building energy efficiency, and transmission improvements.
- Evaluating proposed renewable energy and storage resources and incentivizing the adoption of those clean resources.
- Assisting other agencies with transmission funding and PPA negotiations.
- Overseeing the final recipients of federal funds for the buildout of high-speed charging infrastructure on Maryland's highways and in rural areas.

➔ Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

- Ensuring that low to moderate income (LMI) households receive an equitable share of energy efficiency and decarbonization resources.
- Aligning construction standards to advance decarbonized affordable housing.

REPORT GUIDE

RECOMMENDATION #1: Implement Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022

RECOMMENDATION #2: Maximize Maryland's benefits from federal funding opportunities

RECOMMENDATION #3: Construct more clean, renewable power generation in-state, especially solar power and offshore wind

RECOMMENDATION #4: Justice40 Accountability / Environmental Equity

RECOMMENDATION #5: Ensure the Public Service Commission and the Maryland Energy Administration are working in concert to ensure safe, reliable, clean, and affordable power for all Marylanders

RECOMMENDATION #6: Strengthen incentives and requirements for adopting clean appliances and heating and cooling systems in Maryland buildings

RECOMMENDATION #7: Increase habitat restoration and investment in natural solutions as a climate change response tool for Maryland

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1: Implement Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022

Context: In 2022, Maryland passed the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA). The law aims to reduce pollution that harms our health and worsens climate change and is one of the most ambitious state climate policies in the country. This law made several bold commitments:

- Cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 60% by 2031
- Significantly reduce the burning of fossil fuels in large commercial and multifamily buildings
- Center equity in policies, ensuring that reductions in pollution occur in historically impacted communities and that benefits of new policies prioritize those people most in need

The CSNA aligns perfectly with new federal funding for state, local, and individual climate strategies, but timing is key. **The most significant impact of the legislation is still being written and won't be final until the end of 2023.** The legislation established the GHG reduction goal of 60% by 2031 and net zero by 2045, as well as directed the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to create a plan to achieve those goals. The draft and final plan are due June 2023 and December 2023, respectively. This plan can build upon actions identified through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) but more will be needed to meet the Climate Solution Now Act's goals. For example, existing programs like the Renewable Portfolio Standard and EmPOWER Maryland must be reviewed and updated, and new programs must be implemented.

The first step to implementing the Climate Solution Now Act is the creation of the state's climate plan, which can also serve as a blueprint for this administration's climate objectives for the coming years. Achieving the promise of the Climate Solution Now Act will require robust and equitable public engagement and technical analysis. Unfortunately, state agencies are drastically understaffed and this needs immediate attention.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days **• Create a high level staff position for an appointee who can oversee agency actions on climate and hold regulatory agencies accountable to the goals established in the Climate Solutions Now Act, including:**

- ➔ Identifying the top immediate actions Maryland can take to reduce GHG emissions;
- ➔ Coordinating across state agencies, including setting annual goals and tracking climate programs and projects;
- ➔ Ensuring the state maximizes available federal funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA);
- ➔ Coordinating with the Maryland Department of the Environment and Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to ensure outreach to underserved and overburdened communities as the state creates a methodology for identifying communities disproportionately affected by climate change impacts;

- ➔ Working with the private sector; and
- ➔ This position should have the authority to make policy, staffing, and funding recommendations to the Governor's office as needed.

First 100 Days **• Review agency budgets and evaluate whether additional or different staffing and funding are required to ensure agencies can implement the Climate Solution Now Act, meet the deadlines set forward in that statute, and fully leverage the opportunities provided by the IIJA and IRA, as discussed in Recommendation #2 below. If staffing is needed, allocate funds to hire agency staff who will be directly working to meet climate goals.**

First Year **• Create a blueprint to implement and meet the goals of the Climate Solutions Now Act.**

- ➔ The Governor's Office, with leadership from MDE, MDOT, PSC, and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) should immediately revise the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan due in June of 2023.
- ➔ The release of the Greenhouse Gas reduction plan should be coupled with Executive Orders and announcements for legislative action in 2024 to advance objectives in the plan. Executive and legislative action could include:
  - ◆ Setting specific targets for the percentage of Maryland's energy generation that should come from wind and solar by 2030.
  - ◆ Pass legislation to mandate that the PSC implement a planning process for phasing out reliance on fossil fuel generation in Maryland and replacing it with non-emitting resources such as renewable energy, energy storage, energy efficiency, demand response, and transmission solutions.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- ➔ Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (HR 3684)
- ➔ Inflation Reduction Act (HR 5376)
- ➔ 2030 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act Plan
- ➔ Recommendations for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report

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RECOMMENDATION #2: Maximize Maryland's benefits from federal funding opportunities

Context: An "all-hands-on-deck" strategy will be required in 2023 for the Governor's Office, state agencies, and local governments to access and leverage federal funding and tax credits to maximize the funds to transition to clean, renewable energy for Maryland. By strategically deploying federal funds, the Administration can ensure it is cheaper and easier for individuals, families, businesses, school districts and more to 'go solar,' swap out old, polluting appliances and vehicles, perform energy efficiency retrofits, and save energy.

Remaining funding from the March 2021 American Rescue Plan Act, new funding from the November 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and additional funding, tax credits and consumer rebates authorized under the August 2022 Inflation Reduction Act should immediately be directed toward the highest-priority projects and programs that are mandated by the Climate Solutions Now Act and the Clean Energy Jobs Act. Top priorities will certainly include comprehensive health, safety, efficiency, and electrification retrofits for affordable housing, as well as developing policies ensuring that any new federal funds will not be used to support the expansion or installation of new fossil fuel infrastructure or appliances.

While Maryland has made significant progress in reducing coal-fired power generation in the state, several of Maryland's coal plants are converting to burning other fossil fuels rather than retiring or serving as points of interconnection for renewable energy resources, in part due to local reliability needs for their capacity. In particular, the Baltimore-area coal plants (Brandon Shores and Wagner) will convert to oil by 2025 due to localized grid needs. This transition to oil at Brandon Shores and Wagner is not a long term solution and will continue to be a source of significant air pollution.

Maryland should initiate a process to proactively plan for the retirement of the remaining fossil fuel generators in the state, including Brandon Shores and Wagner, with particular focus on those located in or near environmental justice communities and large population centers. Federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is available for communities making the transition from coal and provides funding "in relation to the infrastructure, environmental remediation, job creation, and community revitalization efforts." Federal funding and tax credits under the Inflation Reduction Act (and private sector investments) could be used to accelerate the use of clean, reliable and less expensive renewable sources of local power in the very short term.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days **• The Governor's Office should identify and appoint lead staff to review all available federal funding opportunities and coordinate agency applications to help meet climate goals.** This position should work closely with the Chief Sustainability, Mitigation and Resilience Officer.

First 100 Days **• Develop and announce a plan for how the administration plans to utilize and distribute available federal funds.**

- ➔ Federal Funding Opportunities for Climate Solutions Now and Clean Energy Jobs Act Implementation include:
  - ◆ Justice 40 – Ensure that at least 40 percent of federal investments involving climate benefits are directed to underserved and overburdened communities. Inflation Reduction Act - provides $207 billion in energy supply infrastructure, and extends $227 billion to businesses and consumers in tax credits for clean energy and related investments. (More information in recommendation #4)

Inflation Reduction Act Funding Summary

Figure 1. Energy supply receives about half of IRA resources, with significant investments in clean manufacturing and housing (billions of dollars)

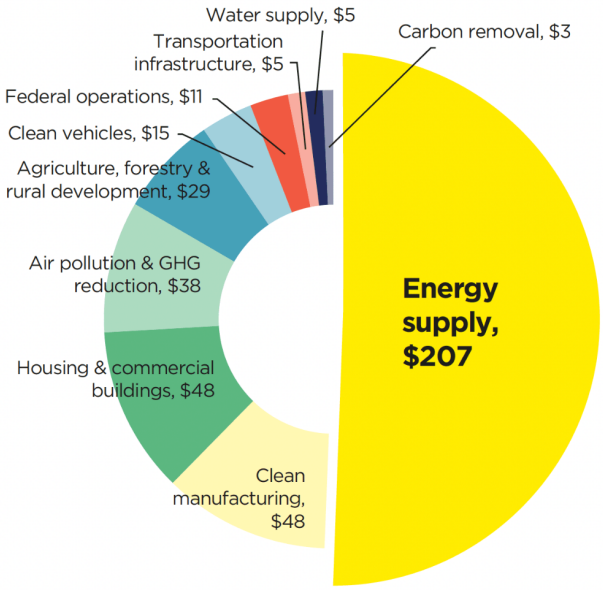
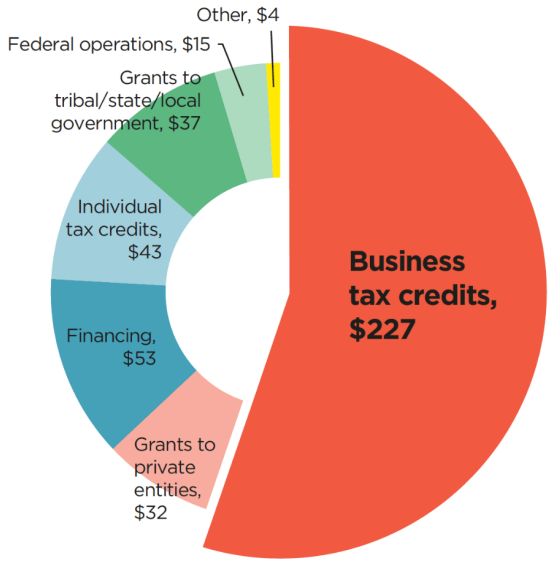


Figure 2. The largest share of IRA funding will be available as tax credits to businesses (billions of dollars)



- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act - This November 2021 law provided more than $550 billion toward transportation and transportation electrification, water, power and energy, environmental remediation, broadband, and resilience infrastructure.
- Funding Opportunities for Transportation Policies
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund
- Federal Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program (HR 5267) - This program establishes discretionary grants for removing, replacing, or retrofitting highways and freeways to improve connectivity in communities and for planning and capacity building to increase community involvement in transportation planning and related activities. The bill prioritizes grants that fund projects in economically disadvantaged communities or that meet other criteria. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) must award the grants to state, tribal, territorial, and local governments and metropolitan planning organizations. For the planning and capacity-building grants, the FHA may award grants to nonprofits or institutions of higher education that partner with governments or metropolitan planning organizations.
- Diesel Emissions Reduction Act ("DERA")

Sources & Supporting Resources

- ➔ The Inflation Reduction Act Delivers Affordable Clean Energy for Maryland *(White House)*
- ➔ Two Anne Arundel power plants announce plans to transition from coal to oil, get green light from Maryland Public Service Commission (Baltimore Sun)

- ➔ Briefing Memos (Center for Climate Strategies)
  - ◆ J40 + Rural Federal Funding
  - ◆ Federal Funding Opportunities for Transportation Policies
- ➔ National Inflation Reduction Act & Maryland (National Caucus of Environmental Legislators)
- ➔ Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (EPA)
- ➔ Federal Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program (HR 5267)
- ➔ Diesel Emission Reduction Act (EPA)

RECOMMENDATION #3: Construct more clean, renewable power generation in-state, especially solar power and offshore wind

Context: Maryland's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act model relies on significant increases in clean energy production in the state. **Maryland's participation in Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and successful implementation of the Clean Energy Jobs Act would achieve approximately 50% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030,** but it is still not enough to reach the 60% reduction by 2031 goal set by the Climate Solutions Now Act. In order to reach 60%, and to eventually reach 100%, Maryland must take ambitious, bold action to expand the state's use of renewable energy sources and implement policies that reduces emissions, for example: "energy optimization," which combines energy efficiency with electrification (replacing fossil fuels with electric energy derived from renewable sources).

Maryland also needs to plan for improvements to the grid and ensure the state has the ability to distribute new sources of clean energy. The state must also move to "clean up" the renewable portfolio by eliminating waste-to-energy, refuse-derived fuel, and ensuring woody biomass is not added as Tier 1 RPS energy sources. Further steps will also need to be made to close coal-fired power plants and replace them with clean energy sources, and avoid further investments in burning fossil fuels.

In an extremely counterproductive fashion, state governmental agencies are currently incentivizing the buildout of gas, despite its heavy GHG emissions. For instance, MEA announced on Nov. 9, 2022 that it aims to effectuate "emissions reductions by expanding natural gas infrastructure and converting inefficient equipment to clean burning natural gas."

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days • **Announce plans for bold renewable energy development as part of the State of the State Address.**

Wind Energy

First Term • **Utilize offshore wind to attain the targets in Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard by adding additional offshore wind targets and exploring the use of power purchase agreements to**

expand offshore wind capacity. Expand production of offshore wind in the short term via state procurement and in the long term by expanding production capacity.

- ➔ Maryland currently has wind power projects scheduled to come online in 2026 that will produce 2 gigawatts (GW) for the state. Another 1200-1600 megawatts (MW) are possible in existing lease areas.
- ➔ New offshore wind lease areas will be auctioned in 2023 with the potential for producing 6 GW of wind power bringing total offshore wind generation close to 10 GW by 2031.
- ➔ DNR should fund a senior position for a permitting advocate to help ensure that both planned and new projects don't face multi-year delays because of avoidable permitting challenges (such as endangered species permitting).

Solar Energy

First Year **• MEA should report annually, in its State Agency Reports, the amount of new solar production (by project) in the previous year and report on opportunities for solar development on rooftops, parking lots, disturbed land, and less productive farmland.** The report should also include MEA's progress towards meeting the state's solar production goals.

First Term **• MEA should provide more public education and technical support to both local governments and the general public to assist with local solar siting decisions, especially for large-scale solar projects.** By providing support, siting decisions can be made more equitably and efficiently.

- ➔ MEA should provide technical support to county and local leaders so they understand the complexities of solar development.
- ➔ Smaller, rural counties in particular would benefit from education and technical support, especially for solar siting. Given land availability in rural areas, there's significant potential for large-scale solar, but less resources to support local governments on siting decisions.
- ➔ For solar projects slated for construction in underserved and overburdened communities, MEA should provide additional, targeted public notice of the project, as well as additional means for community consultation and engagement on the project.

First 100 Days **• MEA should immediately cease providing grants or any other funding designed to expand natural gas infrastructure or incentivize the purchase of fossil-fuel burning equipment.**

First Term **• Legislative Actions the Administration Can Take**

Require long-term contracts for renewable energy to support a portion of the Standard Offer Service in the state. This requirement was previously opposed by the PSC; new PSC appointees should support changes such as this that expand the state's use of renewable energy.

- ➔ With any necessary funding, the General Assembly should require the PSC, MDE, and the Power Plant Research Program, as appropriate, to:
  - ◆ Identify and coordinate with PJM transmission and distribution enhancements to facilitate the integration of renewable resources;

- Evaluate and complete a study no later than January 1, 2024, on implementing a 24/7 tracking system for renewable energy credits to align renewable credits with generation output; and
- Develop a consumer education campaign for electrification.

➔ Examine successes in other states and identify best practices by Maryland local governments to identify effective land use policies for solar siting that can be agreed to (or, if necessary, mandated) for MD's local jurisdictions.
- Support local jurisdictions in developing appropriately balanced solar land use policies.
- The State should incorporate project "readiness" or maturity into solar project siting and permitting (similar to what PJM is doing with "first-ready, first-serve").

➔ Support legislation to direct the PSC to make the community solar program permanent and seamlessly continue it from the pilot stage without interruption while expanding capacity limits for new community solar projects in each utility territory. Support a permanent program in 2023 and require that utility companies have consolidated billing so that low income families needing energy assistance can take advantage of the cost savings afforded by community solar.

➔ Sponsor legislation in the General Assembly to require each county to produce annual renewable energy development and monitoring plans adequate to implement at least their projected (population-based) share of the state's legislated solar energy targets. County plans should designate sites for utility solar according to zoning.

➔ Sponsor legislation to provide additional incentives for solar development on "preferred sites" including residential and commercial rooftops, parking lots, abandoned sites, and brownfields. There are many examples of "upfront" incentives from other states that could be drawn on.
- Provide substantial (e.g., 25% of project cost) refundable state tax credit for new solar arrays on these sites.
- Apply a Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) "multiplier" for preferred sites (e.g., a residential array's output would be valued at 1.5 SREC units).
- Increasing the cost of Solar Alternative Compliance Payments beyond the low and declining levels set by 2021 SB65, to increase SREC value.

➔ MEA and MDE should sponsor legislation to improve Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard to maximize its environmental performance and increase its GHG reduction impact, including removing all combustibles from the RPS.

Sources & Supporting Resources

➔ Recommendations for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report (Sierra Club)

RECOMMENDATION #4: Justice40 Accountability / Environmental Equity

Context: Throughout Maryland's history, infrastructure policies and investments (or lack thereof) have cemented inequities in housing, educational, and economic opportunities, as well as disparities in health and environmental pollution. Moving forward, equity should be a main factor in determining how to spend

federal and state infrastructure investments in communities that are most deserving of funds while delivering jobs and other benefits where they are needed. Likewise, key state agencies in Maryland must comprehensively consider the environmental and climate impacts of their decisions on communities and factor those considerations into their overall decision making process.

Justice40 was introduced in President Joe Biden's Executive Order 14008 as a whole-of-government effort to ensure that *at least* 40 percent of overall climate-related benefits from federal investments are made in overburdened and underserved communities. These communities are in need of better and less polluting public transit, reliable and affordable high-speed internet, and clean drinking water, among other things.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days **• Require all Maryland agencies pursuing federal funding under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act to adopt policies to ensure that at least 40 percent of the climate-related benefits of those federal investments go to overburdened and underserved communities.**

- ➔ The Governor's Office should identify and appoint lead staff to provide accountability, oversight, and coordination with state agencies to ensure they have the resources necessary to fulfill this mandate.

First 100 Days **• Direct all Maryland agencies to study and evaluate how their policies and programs could be improved to more equitably serve overburdened and underserved communities and to make legislative recommendations to make those adjustments permanent.**

First 100 Days **• Direct MDE to adopt a climate equity labor test when deciding on key permits for projects that pollute or degrade the environment.**

- ➔ This test would require MDE to comprehensively consider a new project's impact on climate change, environmental health and justice, job opportunities for local residents, and the social and economic well-being of nearby residents.

First 100 Days **• Appoint additional lead staff to support the work of MDE and the Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities in adopting a methodology for identifying communities disproportionately affected by climate change and developing specific strategies to address environmental justice concerns, reduce emissions of greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutants, and build climate equity and resilience within underserved and overburdened communities.**

- ➔ It is imperative that MDE and the Commission solicit input from impacted communities throughout this process.

First Year **• Ensure that key state agencies meet annual reporting requirements including: the status of their programs, actions that support the State's greenhouse gas reduction efforts or address climate change, and agency contributions to environmental justice and economic well-being.**

Requirements should extend toMDE, MDA, DNR, PSC, MEA, DHCD, BPW, and DOT.

First Term • Extend the climate equity labor test to other state agencies that make key decisions affecting climate change, environmental justice and health, and the social and economic well-being of residents in overburdened and underserved communities.

- ➔ ***First 6 Months*** **• Apply for federal funding through the IRA's equity-focused grant provisions.** The IRA provides billions of dollars for environmentally and economically disadvantaged communities. Maryland's executive branch should advance environmental justice by tapping into these funding sources, which include:
  - Environmental Justice Block Grants (IRA § 60201): The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been allocated $3 billion to distribute to local governments, community-based nonprofits, and partnerships involving community-based nonprofits for environmental projects that help disadvantaged communities. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, climate adaptation measures, zero-emission technology, workforce training, air pollution monitoring, and measures to reduce indoor air pollution. This program will remain active until September 30, 2026.
  - Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (IRA § 60103): This provides funds for green banks, including $7 billion in grants for low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy zero-emission technology and other greenhouse gas emission reduction projects, and $8 billion in additional climate-related grants for low-income and disadvantaged communities. This program will remain active until September 30, 2024.
  - Green & Resilient Retrofit Program (IRA § 30002): The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") has been allocated $1 billion to distribute to owners and operators of low-income housing for sustainable projects, including building electrification, energy efficiency measures, climate resilience measures, and zero-income electricity generation. This program will remain active until September 30, 2028.
  - Renewable energy tax credits (IRA § 13103): Solar and wind facilities that are connected to low-income communities can receive 10% to 20% in tax credits.
  - Fenceline Air Monitoring (IRA § 60105): The EPA has been allocated $200 million for improving air pollution monitoring, with a priority on sites in low-income and disadvantaged communities.
  - Low Emissions Electricity Program (IRA § 60107): The EPA has been allocated $17 million for education, technical assistance, and partnerships aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generation and use in low-income and disadvantaged communities.
  - Air Pollution at Schools (IRA § 60106): The EPA has been allocated $37.5 million to monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities, as well as $12.5 million to provide technical assistance to improve environmental quality at schools in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

First Term • The Governor's Office should identify and appoint lead staff to create opportunities for the executive branch to deepen partnerships with state-recognized Tribal Nations.

➔ Work with Tribal Nations is by nature bipartisan, incorporates environmental and social justice concerns, promotes land conservation, and aligns directly with the vision of Justice 40.

First Term • Pursue Green Bank Opportunities for low-income and underserved communities.

➔ The Inflation Reduction Act amended the Clean Air Act to create a new program: the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. This first-of-its-kind program will provide competitive grants to mobilize financing and leverage private capital for clean energy and climate projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions – with an emphasis on projects that benefit low-income and disadvantaged communities. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund provides $27 billion to EPA for investments through September 30, 2024. In November 2022, EPA initiated a series of listening sessions to allow members of the public and key stakeholder groups to provide input on the design and implementation of the program. The Moore administration should pursue an aggressive strategy of engagement with EPA and Maryland's existing Green Bank practitioners to make sure that low-income and disadvantaged communities in Maryland can access and benefit from this exciting new funding opportunity.

Sources & Supporting Resources

➔ Justice 40 Accelerator

➔ State and Local Solution Center (US DOE)

➔ Joint Office of Energy and Transportation's Webinar: Building Justice40 and Equity Considerations into State Plans (Drive Electric)

➔ MDE EJ Screening Tool

➔ Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (EPA)

RECOMMENDATION #5: Ensure the Public Service Commission and the Maryland Energy Administration are working in concert to ensure safe, reliable, clean, and affordable power for all Marylanders

Context: The PSC is poised to play an essential role in helping the state reach its net-zero targets because its influence spans the building, transportation, and electricity generation sectors, which together comprise the vast majority of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions. The PSC should be properly resourced and directed to use its authority to require utilities to implement aggressive building electrification measures, support the buildout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and effectively manage the new load from beneficial electrification, while also streamlining and supporting the rapid addition of renewables to Maryland's electric grid.

This is a pivotal time to bolster the capacity of the PSC and Maryland's other environmental agencies. Federal funding from the IIJA and IRA is designed to accelerate transformative changes in Maryland's power grid, power generation capacity, energy efficiency programs, communication systems, water

distribution systems, and other infrastructure that lies within the PSC's scope of authority. Together, the IIJA and IRA offer tens of billions of dollars for adopting clean energy supply infrastructure at a societal level and upgrading to clean appliances and distributed generation resources at a household level. The PSC is ideally situated to work with utilities on facilitating the coordination of federal funding, state and local matching funds, and private sector investments that pour in to make these historic changes to Maryland's energy, water, transportation, and communications systems. However, taxpayers, ratepayers, businesses, consumers, and state and local governments need a transparent and coordinated system – potentially administered by MDE or MEA – to identify and track utilities' implementation of the CSNA and their spending of all of these sources of funding. In short, Maryland needs a plan for monitoring utilities' usage of federal funds and encouraging consumers and businesses to take advantage of these funding sources as well.

The PSC has acknowledged its inadequate resources multiple times in recent years—especially in relation to implementing the Maryland General Assembly's policy directives. Recently, the PSC initiated a proceeding (Public Conference No. 57) seeking stakeholder input regarding how the Commission should enhance its staffing and resources to meet its current statutory mandates. The Hogan Administration appointees comprising the current PSC have generally proven resistant or obstructive to the General Assembly's energy sector mandated initiatives; examples include the lack of meaningful progress made by the majority-Republican PSC's Working Groups on Community Solar, Community Choice Aggregation – Montgomery County Pilot, limited-income energy efficiency savings goals, and Distribution System Planning. Recently, the PSC, relying on statements by known climate deniers, publicly characterized renewable energy resources as "dirty"—a statement reflecting dismissal, if not downright denial, of climate change. Similarly, during an EmPOWER hearing, one Commissioner refused to end gas appliance incentives, stating that as long as it is legal to sell natural gas, it is not going to do that. There is no viable pathway to achieving Maryland CSNA goals that can be built around replacing one fossil fuel with another; gas replacements and slightly more efficient gas appliances are a climate dead end.

In order to meet the goals laid out by the CSNA, Maryland needs to drastically reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. Currently, gas comprises 44.4% and coal comprises 13.3% of Maryland's in-state generation of electricity. Nuclear power makes up 36.9% of the state's generation, and the nuclear reactors at Calvert Cliffs are scheduled to retire in a decade. **Maryland is not at all on track to meet the targets in its Renewable Portfolio Standard, which requires 50% of Maryland's energy to be renewable by 2030.** Renewable energy currently comprises only 5% of Maryland's energy generation. Maryland also has a long way to go toward electrifying its transportation and building sectors, which emit roughly 35% and 16% of its greenhouse gas emissions, respectively.

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days **• Strengthen the Public Service Commission**

- ➔ The Administration should make clear that its intention is for the PSC - in tandem with the Maryland Energy Administration and other governmental agencies - to protect consumers, and follow through on commitments to equitably transition to clean, renewable electricity, and transportation throughout the state.

- ➔ The Administration should appoint Commissioners and a Commission Chair that possess the know-how and motivation to prioritize equitably achieving the CSNA's GHG emission reduction requirements and ensure that utilities and their customers are taking advantage of federal funds in the IIJA and IRA.
- ➔ The PSC should hold utilities and retail suppliers accountable by enforcing penalties for false marketing, failure to meet consumer benefits laid out in merger agreements, failure to sufficiently respond to gas explosions, and ensuring retail suppliers cap rates for energy assistance households at the standard offer rate (*See* PC 55).
- ➔ The PSC should be provided with additional funding to hire additional staff and/or retain consultants that have more technical expertise in renewable energy, building and transportation electrification, energy efficiency, and the difficulties associated with electrifying the grid.
- ➔ The PSC should commission a robust analysis on the changes in Maryland's generation, distribution, and transmission systems that would be necessary to fully electrify Maryland's building and transportation sectors and actively pursue the necessary changes.

First Year • Support efforts in the legislature and PSC to reform the EmPOWER energy efficiency program.

- ➔ Sponsor legislation in 2023 that would amend Maryland Public Utilities Article (PUA) § 7–211(g)(2) to replace EmPOWER's electricity usage metric with a GHG abatement goal to unlock the significant climate reduction potential of beneficial electrification.
- ➔ Sponsor legislation that would, pursuant to the PSC's "Recommendations on the Future of EmPOWER Maryland," amend PUA § 7–211 to adopt the PSC's recommendation to establish a limited-income GHG abatement goal for DHCD and adopt the Primary Maryland Jurisdiction-Specific test for cost-effectiveness.
- ➔ Sponsor legislation and PSC measures that would direct the EmPOWER utilities to incentivize fuel-switching from propane, fuel oil, and gas-powered appliances toward electric appliances.
    - ◆ Ensure DHCD utilizes federal funding to encourage fuel-switching from fossil fuels to efficient electric appliances by providing incentives for heat pump space heating and hot water heating, high-efficiency electric clothes dryers, and induction ranges/stovetops starting in 2024 (as recommended by the MCCC in 2020, 2021 and 2022).
    - ◆ All EmPOWER audits should include a proposal to make the building electric-ready (i.e. by including electric service panels and wiring), along with an offer of a 100% subsidy/rebate for electric-ready implementation.
- ➔ Sponsor legislation in 2023 to require the PSC to sunset financial subsidies for fossil fuel appliances within EmPOWER starting in 2024, in accordance with this recommendation to "Sunset financial subsidies for fossil fuel appliances within EmPOWER." Recently this was recommended to the PSC as part of EmPOWER, and the PSC declined, suggesting the legislative intent of SB528 was unclear. The PSC should phase out any incentives for gas-powered appliances and fossil fuel infrastructure immediately in order to reach the CSNA's goal of 60% GHG emission reductions by 2031, and financial incentives should be aligned immediately.
- ➔ Develop strategies to support family-sustaining wages in EmPOWER-related programs and sectors, with particular consideration for transitioning workers currently focused in the gas industry.

First Term • **Affirmatively task the PSC with implementing state and federal climate laws, and support policy measures that would strengthen Maryland's transition toward cleaner generation.**

- ➔ The legislature should direct the PSC to regulate utilities in a manner that equitably achieves Maryland's ambitious GHG emission reduction goals of 60% in 2031 (based on 2006 levels) and net-zero emissions by 2045. Increasing electrification and efficiency will be critical to meeting the CSNA's GHG reduction targets, and as noted above, the PSC plays a pivotal role in these processes.
- ➔ The PSC should issue an updated order in PC 56, a recently initiated docket requiring utilities to submit regular reports about their applications for funds pursuant to the IIJA. This updated order should provide the PSC with more oversight over utilities' applications for federal grants—with the goal of sending a strong message to the federal government that Maryland is well-positioned to optimize these investments.
    - ◆ The current order in PC 56 only requires utilities to submit monthly reports about their applications for funding under IIJA grants, with no oversight or review by the Commission. The PSC should assume a larger role in this docket to ensure that Marylanders receive the full benefits available under the IIJA. This larger role should include permitting stakeholders to comment on how utilities should be seeking IRA funds for their operations and their customers.
    - ◆ Utilities should also be required to communicate to customers about the IRA's many tax credits and rebates for individuals and businesses.
    - ◆ This docket would make it easier for policymakers in Maryland to advance and coordinate programs aimed at expanding access to clean energy and clean water, improving grid resilience and security, and supporting innovation in energy efficiency and energy technologies.
- ➔ Maryland should strongly encourage the other states participating in the RGGI to reduce the regional CO_2 emissions cap to zero by 2040.
- ➔ In addition to its advocacy within RGGI, Maryland should codify its own requirement of zero-emission electricity on both a consumption and a production basis by 2040.

First Term • **The PSC should prepare utilities and the grid for a transition toward full electrification.**

- ➔ Ensure that the PSC and MEA utilize available funding, particularly funding sources from IIJA, for "Make-Ready" consumer-end grid and other upgrade requirements that are needed for the progressive use of distributed energy resources and increased electrification.
    - ◆ The IIJA (§ 40101) provided $5 billion in funding for Grid Infrastructure, Resilience, and Reliability to establish a grant program to support activities to reduce the likelihood, consequences of, and impacts to the electric grid due to extreme weather, wildfire, and natural disasters. Approximately 50% of the total ($2.5 billion) funding is allocated to states via formula.
- ➔ The IIJA (§ 40103) also directed $5 billion in funding towards Upgrading Our Electric Grid and Ensuring Reliability and Resiliency. This DOE program will provide states, tribes, PSCs, and local governments with support for transmission, storage, distribution hardening, and regional grid resilience.

- ➔ Require collaborative planning between utilities and developers to maximize the "locational value-added" and other beneficial aspects of renewable energy development. Each utility should be required to develop an analysis of where community solar projects would benefit the distribution grid. The utilities should be required to share this information with community solar developers so that developers can consider this locational value-add in determining the location of their projects.
- ➔ While deploying new renewable resources, take adequate steps to ensure grid resilience and reliability—in a manner that takes into account input from stakeholders and local communities.
    - ◆ Ensure funding for low and moderate income community (LMI) solar remains dedicated to LMI projects, and that enough funding exists to fully support the program.
    - ◆ New substations for grid expansion/reliability should not be placed in overburdened communities or disproportionately located in communities of color.
- ➔ Ensure that the PSC works with other governmental agencies to take a holistic approach to building retrofits, ensuring that pre-electrification work (e.g., weatherization and mold remediation) is being coordinated with electrification programs and efforts.
- ➔ Sponsor legislation requiring the PSC to (1) develop utility transition plans by directing the PSC to oversee a process whereby the electric and gas utility companies establish plans for achieving a structured and just transition to a near-zero emissions buildings sector in Maryland, and (2) require all gas utilities to fully depreciate their distribution infrastructure by 2045.
    - ◆ Ensure it is clear to the PSC that the outcome of this docket must involve transitioning away from pipeline-based fuels.
    - ◆ The General Assembly should direct the PSC to develop a plan for managing utilities' transition—including by commissioning technical studies, providing training resources for affected members of Maryland's workforce, and reforming how natural gas infrastructure is funded—in a way that equitably safeguards lower-income residents and small businesses.
- ➔ Ensure utilities and transit systems are applying for federal grants that will enable the use of electric fleets and the installation of electric vehicle charging equipment for light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty vehicles across the state. These grants include, but are not limited to:
    - ◆ The Federal Highway Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program (CMAQ);
    - ◆ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Diesel Emission Reduction Act program (DERA); and
    - ◆ The Federal Transit Administration's Low/No NOx program (Low/No).

First Term • Work with the General Assembly and PSC to eliminate incentives for gas infrastructure.

- ➔ Sponsor legislation that amends Section (b) of the "Infrastructure replacement surcharge" provision in PUA § 4-210. Section (b), titled "Legislative intent," currently reads, "It is the intent of the General Assembly that the purpose of this section is to accelerate gas infrastructure improvements in the State by establishing a mechanism for gas companies to promptly recover reasonable and prudent costs of investments in eligible infrastructure replacement projects separate from base rate proceedings." Accelerating gas infrastructure buildout will require utility customers to spend decades paying for a gas distribution system that will impede Maryland's ability to meet the CSNA's goals.

- ➔ Urge the PSC or legislature to suspend the Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement (STRIDE) program, which is incentivizing a major expansion of gas pipeline infrastructure, and put a moratorium on integrating biogas into existing gas pipelines.
    - ◆ Problematically, in addition to approving the costly and expansive STRIDE program, in August 2021, the PSC approved Baltimore Gas & Electric's request to place biogas from anaerobic digesters in its pipelines.
    - ◆ An independent study is needed to measure the lifecycle GHG impact of biogas (from production to combustion), including the impact of leaks and the environmental impacts of the activities that generate biogas (e.g., confined animal farming). This study should also identify the end uses for which Maryland's limited supply of environmentally responsible supply of biogas should be directed, and should make clear that biogas is not an appropriate or viable decarbonization strategy for the buildings sector, where efficient and effective low-cost electrification alternatives exist.
- ➔ The PSC should require all gas utilities to report on each leak on a quarterly basis, including the grade and volume of each leak.
- ➔ Discontinue MEA's Maryland Energy Infrastructure Grant Program and the Maryland Gas Expansion Fund that supports this program. This MEA program is dangerously misleading, as it publicly states that "[n]atural gas is cleaner, safer, and easier to store than other fuels." Incentivizing the buildout of new gas infrastructure and appliances is directly at odds with the CSNA's GHG emission reduction requirements. Any funds that remain in the Gas Expansion Fund should be reallocated toward programs that are designed to implement the CSNA's ambitious requirements.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- ➔ In Court, the Maryland Public Service Commission Quotes Climate Deniers and Claims There's No Such Thing as 'Clean' Energy (Inside Climate News)
- ➔ US Energy Atlas - Maryland (EIA)
- ➔ Maryland GHG Emissions Trend by Sector (Maryland Open Data)
- ➔ PSC Recommendations on the Future of EmPOWER Maryland (MD PSC)
- ➔ Maryland Energy Infrastructure Program (MD Energy Administration)
- ➔ Recommendations for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report (Sierra Club)
- ➔ Federal Grant Opportunities for Utilities Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Maryland PSC)
- ➔ Summary of IRA Residential Energy Efficiency and Electrification Provisions (National Association of State Energy Officials)
- ➔ Baltimore Gas and Electric Company – Supplement No. 479 to P.S.C. Md. G-9: Renewable Natural Gas Interconnection Service (PSC)
- ➔ "Governor Hogan's Plans to 'Kick-Start' a Gas Expansion Across Maryland" - White Paper (CCAN)

RECOMMENDATION #6: Strengthen incentives and requirements for adopting clean appliances and heating and cooling systems in Maryland buildings

Context: Gas-powered furnaces, boilers, water heaters, dryers, stovetops and ovens account for most of the residential use of natural gas. They are replaced on cycles of as long as 20 years and need to be electrified prior to 2045 to meet Maryland's climate goals. Starting to replace these gas-powered appliances soon will have a significant impact on future GHG emissions. Replacing them with electric appliances as they reach end-of-life is a logical way to accomplish our climate goals.

The IIJA provides more than $550 billion in transportation, water, power and energy, environmental remediation, broadband, and resilience infrastructure. The IRA provides $207 billion in direct energy supply infrastructure investments and extends unprecedented business and consumer tax credits for clean energy and related investments. These IRA investments are illustrated above in Figures 1 & 2. The Moore administration should endeavor as soon as possible to maximize Maryland's ability to fund programs that are already mandated under the CSNA and the Clean Energy Jobs Act with newly available IIJA and IRA competitive grant funding for climate-related infrastructure.

While the Moore administration should generally apply IIJA and IRA funds towards Maryland's high-priority climate programs and goals, these funds are particularly relevant for strengthening the state's Building Codes. Section 40511 of the IIJA provides a total of $225 million, or $45 million per year, to state energy offices and/or local non-profit partners for the implementation of stronger building codes that reduce carbon emissions. Section 50131 of the IRA provides an additional $1 billion to support local and state governments in adopting building energy codes that promote electrification and energy efficiency. There is no state matching requirement for these federal funds. Sources of funding under the IIJA and IRA would also allow Maryland to provide grants (with a 50% cost share required) to educational institutions to establish building code training and assessment centers that would educate and train building technicians and engineers on implementing modern building technologies. Ramping up the development of stronger building codes, training building code inspectors, and providing technical assistance for local governments should all be high-priority activities for the Moore administration.

As noted above, Maryland's buildings make up 16% of the state's total GHG emissions. The building sector's GHG emissions largely stem from the use of natural gas, heating oil, and propane in buildings—mostly for space heating and water heating. As the MCCC has noted, "the 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan calls for reducing emissions from buildings through energy efficiency and by converting fossil fuel heating systems to electric heat pumps. Heat pumps are essentially air conditioners that can reverse cycle to provide efficient heating and cooling in one system, powered by increasingly clean electricity. They are already the second-most common heating system in Maryland."

Recommended Actions

First 100 Days* • *Ensure that Maryland's environmental agencies adopt stringent and detailed building and construction codes.

- ➔ MDE's draft regulations should ensure that the Maryland Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) are promulgated on time and are on track to achieve the required net-zero GHG emission reductions by 2040 from Maryland's large buildings.

➔ The Building Codes Administration should adopt an all-electric construction code that requires new residential and commercial construction to be fully electric by 2024 . It should also include a provision in Maryland's building code to require that all new buildings above 15,000 square feet—both residential and commercial—be solar-ready. (Building Energy Transition Plan, 2021).

First 100 Days • DHCD should develop a financing proposal in 2023 to utilize federal funds for the re-allocation of EmPOWER funds toward low-income households (from 7% of EmPOWER funds to 40%).

➔ In 2021, the MCCC made a critical proposal to "Develop a Clean Heat Retrofit Program," which calls for retrofitting 100% of low-income households by 2030 (recommendation 2A), encouraging fuel-switching and beneficial electrification through EmPOWER beginning in 2024 (recommendations 2B and 2C), and aiming for 50% of residential HVAC and water heater sales to be heat pumps by 2025, with 95% of such sales by 2030 (recommendation 2D). Maryland must take quick action in order to utilize funds from the IRA and IIJA to finance these actions.

- ◆ EmPOWER spends about $326 million per year on energy efficiency, but only 7% (as of 2020) is dedicated to low-income households. The proportion dedicated to low-income households needs to rise dramatically to meet the MCCC's stated goal of retrofitting 100% of low-income households with clean heat by 2030.
- ◆ In addition to utilizing federal funding, DHCD, MDE, and other executive agencies should be allocating state funds in order to effectuate EmPOWER's goals for electrifying low-income households.

First 100 Days • Prioritize providing low- and middle-income households with affordable zero-emission heating, cooling, and appliances.

➔ MDE should develop a plan to install heat pumps in all LMI homes, including rental homes, that currently lack air conditioning by 2025.

➔ MDE should provide resources and develop a plan to weatherize and electrify all LMI homes, including rental homes, by 2031.

➔ Incentives provided through the IRA, EmPOWER, and other federal and state policies should cover all or most of the cost of retrofitting existing buildings with zero-emission heating, cooling, and appliances in households that are at or below 150% of the area median income.

First 100 Days • The General Assembly should authorize MDE to develop a zero-emissions standard for space heating and water heating equipment and appliances, with the goal of achieving a structured phaseout of non-essential emissions-producing equipment in buildings by 2030.

➔ This would be the enforcement mechanism to achieve the MCCC's Building Energy Transition Plan recommendation for 50% of residential heating systems, cooling systems, and water heater sales to be heat pumps by 2025, reaching 95% by 2030. MDE's Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force should evaluate what, if any, additional state support would be required to cover retrofit costs (MCCC - Building Energy Transition Plan, 2021). This requirement is important for ensuring a timely transition to all-electric appliances.

First Year • **MDE should provide Maryland residents with information and guidance in accessing the IRA's various tax credits and rebates for consumers.** Consumers and businesses can access multiple financial incentives for electrification and energy efficiency in the IRA:

- ➔ Pursuant to the Home Owner Managing Savings (HOMES) rebates, qualifying households can receive rebates covering 50% to 100% of the cost of energy efficiency upgrades to single-family homes, depending on customers' income levels. Additionally, energy efficiency upgrades to multifamily buildings can qualify for rebates that cover 50% to 80% of the cost of the upgrades. IRA § 50121(c).
- ➔ Pursuant to the IRA's High-Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Program, households below 150% of area median income can receive rebates of up to $14,000 for home upgrades, including $1,750 for an electric heat pump water heater; $8,000 for an electric heat pump for space heating or cooling, $840 for an electric stove, oven, or electric heat pump clothes dryer; $4,000 for an electric load service center upgrade; $1,600 for insulation, air sealing, and ventilation; and $2,500 for electric wiring upgrades. IRA § 50122(c).
- ➔ Individual households can qualify for "25C" tax credits covering 30% of qualified energy efficiency expenditures. IRA § 13301.
- ➔ Individual households can qualify for "25D" tax credits covering 30% of eligible expenses on clean energy until 2033, as well as 26% of such expenses in 2023 and 22% of such expenses in 2024. IRA § 13302.
- ➔ Commercial buildings can qualify for "179D" tax credits that can cover $2.50 to $5.00 of the cost per square foot of energy efficiency measures. IRA § 13303.
- ➔ Newly constructed homes that meet Energy Star qualifications can qualify for a $2,500 tax credit, and new homes that are "Zero Energy Ready" can qualify for a $5,000 tax credit. IRA § 13304. This tax credit could be helpful for a subset of Pepco or WGL customers who are constructing new homes, rather than retrofitting existing ones.
- ➔ MDE should create a one-stop shop portal that has navigators and information on not only the IRA's benefits, but also all state and local energy programs, including a contractor database, a green bank, and other financing options for use by consumers, contractors, building owners, and developers.

First Term • **Legislative actions the Administration can take**

- ➔ The General Assembly should require MDE to develop a Building Emissions Standard that shall achieve net-zero emissions from commercial and multi-family residential buildings by 2040. Schools and state-owned buildings shall be required to meet this standard by 2035.
- ➔ Prohibit fossil-powered residential and commercial heating, ventilation, and air conditioning and water heater sales after 2030. This would assist in achieving MCCC recommendation 2D, "Target 50% of residential heating, ventilation, and air conditioning and water heater sales to be heat pumps by 2025, 95% by 2030." If the new administration wants to achieve the MCCC's goal of having heat pumps deliver 95% of heating, ventilation, air conditioning and water heaters by 2030, then the legislature must prohibit fossil-powered residential and commercial heating, ventilation, air conditioning and water heater sales after 2030.
- ➔ The General Assembly should adopt measures and provide funding to ensure affordable utility service for low- and moderate-income ratepayers in the transition to a highly electrified building sector (MCCC - Building Energy Transition Plan, 2021).

Sources & Supporting Resources

- ➔ Maryland GHG Emissions Trend by Sector (Maryland Open Data)
- ➔ Maryland Building Decarbonization Study - Final Report (E3)
- ➔ Maryland Building Energy Transition Plan (MD Commission on Climate Change)
- ➔ Recommendations for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change Annual Report (Sierra Club)

RECOMMENDATION #7: Increase habitat restoration and investment in natural solutions as a climate change response tool for Maryland.

Context: Maryland's unique habitats, from our mountain forests and our piedmont river valleys to our coastal wetlands, provide critical habitat and healthy ecosystems which benefit people and animals alike. These habitats importantly also serve as a vital tool to mitigate climate change through green infrastructure and natural solutions to protect local communities and economies. Tidal marshlands, which are under threat from sea level rise, serve to protect vulnerable towns and cities by buffering against flooding. Wetlands and marshes also absorb carbon, helping to slow the effects of our warming climate. Healthy forests and riparian buffers throughout the state capture carbon from the atmosphere, filter pollutants from our air and water, and stabilize the landscape against the severe flooding that impacts Maryland's communities throughout the state. Investments in these natural solutions are needed to protect our population from increasingly severe and regular climate events now, but also to slow and prevent the impacts of a rapidly changing climate in the future.

Maryland's diverse landscapes and people are poised to be national leaders for using natural solutions to protect our communities from the adverse impacts of climate change - creating preparedness and climate resiliency in our landscapes and our economies.

Recommended Actions:

First Term • Use resources from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bi-Partican Infrastructure Bill to invest in natural climate solutions.

- ➔ Partner with MD's federal delegation, EPA, NPS, ACoE and USFWS to access federal funding opportunities to invest in natural climate solutions such as wetland restoration, healthy forest management, carbon sequestration, increased tree canopy, riparian buffers, etc, ensuring Maryland is a national leader in implementing natural climate solutions to mitigate and slow climate change.

First Term • Restore Chesapeake and Atlantic tidal marshes.

- ➔ Working with federal and local partners (EPA, USFWS, USDA, NPS), MD state agencies (MDE, DNR, DoP) need to prioritize restoration of tidal marshes and living shorelines to prevent climate driven sea level rise, store and remove carbon from the atmosphere, protect climate vulnerable economies, and create habitat for threatened species.

- ➔ Reinforce existing and increase the amount of new living shorelines, wetlands, and tidal marshes in MD.
- ➔ Reform living shorelines laws to remove loopholes exploited by contractors.
- ➔ Require and incentivize more 'living' aspects to be included in living shoreline designs to include natural climate solutions such as water filtering bivalves and carbon sequestering grasses and plants.
- ➔ Supporting marsh replenishment through the Beneficial Use of dredged material.
- ➔ Create protected marsh migration corridors for rare or threatened avian and aquatic life, which has the added benefit of increasing the amount of natural climate solutions in Maryland - sequestering carbon, mitigating sea-level rise, and protecting climate-vulnerable communities, economies, and cultural heritage resources from the impacts of climate change.

First Term • Partner with federal agencies through the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership

- ➔ The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership (SLP) is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, and Department of Interior to encourage sustainable practices on working lands, as well as conservation of lands and waters near military installations.
- ➔ The SLPin Maryland offers tremendous opportunities to restore and conserve habitats on a greater scale than is typically possible, improving ecosystems' resilience to a changing climate and providing test cases for conservation techniques and projects that could be put into practice across the state.

First Term • Beneficial use of dredged material from offshore wind installation

- ➔ Expand the beneficial use of dredged material and increase MDE & DNR staffing for collaboration between off-shore wind developers, Maryland Port Administration, and local jurisdictions to ensure the dredged material from the installation of offshore wind (OSW) is used for the creation of climate resilient coastal landscapes including saltmarshes, wetlands, and living shorelines which will create habitat and protect vulnerable coastal communities against climate change driven sea level rise.

First Term • Implement critical legislation passed by the General Assembly

- ➔ **Support the Irreplaceable Natural Areas Act**
  - ◆ DNR should iImplement and accelerate the recently passed HB 784/CH420 Irreplaceable Natural Areas Act. Prioritization and resources are needed for DNR to create land management plans for state owned land that is classified as irreplaceable to protect these natural climate solutions from development pressures or alterations which would diminish the ecosystem services and natural climate solutions they currently provide for Maryland's climate and people.
- ➔ **Streamline permitting for approved environmental restoration work - Cutting Green Tape**
  - ◆ Enact and accelerate the recently passed required study HB 869/SB 945 by increasing permitting staff at MDE and DNR. MDE is required to study ways to streamline the permitting process for wetland restoration work, with the goal of removing prohibitive costs and timelines and expediting ecological restoration work in the state's wetlands. This will

enable state and federal agencies and NGO partners to expedite habitat restoration and natural climate solutions in Maryland's marshes and coastal bays.

- ➔ **Support and accelerate the Maryland Great Outdoors Act**
  - ◆ The Executive Branch needs to ensure that the Maryland Great Outdoors Act HB 727/SB 541 is fully staffed and resourced through DNR to adequately acquire land and support land management needs called for in the recently passed legislation. Making sure this bill and relevant agencies are prioritized will position the state to protect green infrastructure assets, thus enhancing the role of publicly protected land in the scope of natural solutions for climate resilience in Maryland.

First Term • **Legislative actions the Administration can advocate for:**

- ➔ **Prioritize Maryland the Beautiful: 30x30 in the legislature**
  - ◆ The Executive Branch and Legislature need to prioritize passing Maryland the Beautiful: 30x30 legislation, setting a clear path for Maryland to put a minimum 30% of land in the state into preservation and conservation through a combination of public land, easements, and land trusts. Currently, 23% of state landmass is under protection/conservation easements.
    - Preserving 30% of state land will put the state on track to reach the Biden Administration's goal of preserving 30% of America's land by 2030.
    - In Maryland this means the public will own the green infrastructure and natural solutions which will capture carbon, mitigate a warming climate, protect vulnerable shorelines, clean the Chesapeake Bay, filter freshwater aquifers, and mitigate dangerous flooding events.
- ➔ **Strengthen the Maryland Forest Conservation Act**
  - ◆ Sponsor legislation to enhance the Maryland Forest Conservation Act by strengthening the law to protect Maryland's forests from the pressures of encroaching development. MDE and DNR need increased regulatory authority to hold developers accountable to the MD Forest Conservation Act.
  - ◆ State government needs to incentivise conservation best practices for developers, contractors, and land-use planners for healthy forest management and conservation.

Sources & Supporting Resources

- ➔ Department of Natural Resources - Irreplaceable Natural Areas Program - Establishment (HB 784)
- ➔ Wetlands and Waterways Program Division – Permitting for Ecological Restoration Projects – Required Study (HB 869/SB 945)
- ➔ Maryland Great Outdoors Act (HB 727/SB 541)
- ➔ Cutting Green Tape (California Natural Resources Agency)