

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: SB 414 - "Climate Solutions Now Act"

Organization: Climate Parents of Prince George's
Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta, Lead Volunteer
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 31, 2021

Climate Parents of Prince George's supports SB 414, "Climate Solutions Now Act"

Buildings generate a significant percentage of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions. According to the most recent greenhouse gas inventory developed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for Washington, DC and surrounding counties, including Prince George's County, around 50 percent of regional greenhouse gas emissions are generated by residential and commercial buildings.¹ Thus, addressing the energy efficiency of buildings is integral to Climate Solutions Now achieving its goal. We cannot delay or water down the building provisions of SB 414.

Recent reports from the International Panel on Climate Change pretty clearly state we reach net zero emissions by 2050 to avoid the worst of climate change. While turn over in some sectors is quite quick, buildings have a long life cycle. Barring catastrophes, nearly every building being constructed now will be in operation in 2050. The more of these buildings that aren't constructed to high energy efficiency standards now, the more our children will have to invest in premature energy retrofits to create the efficient building stock Marylanders will need to be doing business in by 2050.

It also makes economic sense to have strong energy efficient building standards now. A recent report by Building Subworkgroup for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change² found great cost savings when new buildings are built with energy efficiency in mind and rely on electric air source or ground source heat pumps for heating and cooling rather than natural gas. This one two punch of electrification and efficiency will lead to real long term cost savings that will benefit the Maryland economy since every penny that is not spent wasted on energy can be recirculated to build a stronger Maryland.

The Net-Zero School Fund is also vital to our success in combating the climate emergency. Earlier this month the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Board of Education passed a resolution committing to switch to 100% clean energy buildings by 2040 and making this switch will be far more reasonable if it can take advantage of innovative financing programs such as the Net-Zero School Fund. Also, the long term cost savings from Net-Zero Schools can be recycled into other priorities, in particular speeding up the backlog some county school districts face in terms of building replacement, as well as to free up local monies to fund education priorities under Kirwin Blueprint.

These two areas only scratch the surface of the holistic approach towards fighting the climate emergency that has been developed under the Climate Solutions Now Act. There are numerous other areas that are supported with sound science and the need for wise long term investments.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

¹ "Metropolitan Washington Community-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Summary." Feb 2021.

² "Decarbonizing Buildings in Maryland." Sept 2020.

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/MCCC/MWG/Decarbonizing%20Buildings%20in%20Maryland.pdf>