



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Dana Stein
Delegate, Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for HB 583, Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

Dear Delegate Stein:

On behalf of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), we are writing to offer our support for your bill, HB 583, Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021. As the association of local governments in metropolitan Washington, COG supports Maryland's aggressive efforts to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

COG recently adopted new greenhouse gas (GHG) emission targets for 2030, which call for 50 percent greenhouse gas emission reductions below 2005 levels by 2030, which aligns with the level of effort called for by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. Currently, Maryland mandates the reduction of GHG emission by 40 percent by 2030 based on 2006 levels, the bill would increase this reduction to 60% as well as achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2045.

One of the most direct ways to increase levels of carbon sequestration is to expand tree canopies. The annual funding of directing \$15 million from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to plant 5 million trees over the next 10 years, including 500,000 trees in underserved, urban areas will be critical in supporting local jurisdictions increase their tree canopy coverage. The funding will directly assist localities to offset emissions through sequestration. Expanding legislation at the state level to help meet the region's medium- and long-term climate change goals is one of COG's environmental priorities. COG supports the passage of this bill, as it assists the COG region to move towards achieving the GHG emission reduction goals.

Please contact Jeffrey King, COG's Chief of Energy and Climate Programs at (202) 962-3238 or jking@mwkog.org and Steven Bieber, COG's Water Resources Program Director at (202) 962-3219 or sbieber@mwkog.org if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Deni Taveras in blue ink.

Deni Taveras
Chair, Climate, Energy, and Environment
Policy Committee
Prince George's County

Handwritten signature of Laurie-Anne Sayles in blue ink.

Laurie-Anne Sayles
Chair, Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources
Policy Committee
City of Gaithersburg