

- To: Secretary Serena McIlwain Maryland Department of the Environment Montgomery Park Business Center 1800 Washington Blvd. Baltimore, MD 21230
- CC: Susan Casey, Research and Communications Manager, Maryland Department of the Environment

Re: Maryland's Climate Pathway Report

October 16, 2023

Dear Secretary McIlwain,

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club has collected 120 public comments on the Maryland Climate Pathway Report and priorities for the State's 2031 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. The names of the individuals submitting comments are listed in the rest of the document. Each of them signed onto the following text:

Subject: Adopt a bold and ambitious plan to cut climate pollution 60% by 2031

To achieve our ambitious climate goals, we will need an all-of-government approach, integrating climate into the work of every agency and program. I urge the Maryland Department of the Environment to include the following in its climate plan:

Power Maryland with 100% clean renewable energy.

- Commit to concrete dates and plans to phase out dirty electricity generation including coal by 2025 and all other polluting sources like gas and trash incineration no later than 2035.
- Fix or replace the renewable portfolio standard to truly advance only clean renewables like wind, solar and storage.
- Develop mandates and incentives to replace this generation with clean energy. Remove institutional barriers to growing clean energy, such as restrictive zoning or bureaucratic delays.

Connect communities across Maryland with reliable public transit and cleaner transportation.

- Invest in building a 21st century reliable public transit system and walkable bikeable communities. Build new protected bike lanes, and provide reliable transit service near our homes and communities that folks can count on. Billions of dollars are needed to ensure the completion of the Purple Line and Red Line light rail projects.
- Expand MARC commuter rail service.
- Phase out the procurement of diesel school and transit buses by 2025, the sale of gasoline-powered cars by 2035, and the sale of diesel trucks by 2036 and build the charging infrastructure to support this transition.



Ensure that Marylanders can live, learn, and work in healthy, safe, and climate-friendly buildings.

- Transition homes, schools, and buildings to clean technology. As part of this transition, Maryland should address both indoor and outdoor air quality by adopting a zeroemissions appliance standard and prioritize electrification of homes.
- Develop a one-stop-shop whole-home retrofit program that provides low-income households with health and safety repairs, weatherization, appliance electrification, and energy efficiency at no cost to residents.

Waste less; reduce, reuse, compost, and recycle more.

- Prevent food waste and divert it from landfills. Increase commercial, household, and institutional food scrap composting statewide.
- Enforce stronger landfill methane regulations and phase out trash incinerators.
- Reduce waste and greenhouse emissions from the extraction, manufacture, transport, and disposal of products by enacting a beverage container deposit/return program, requiring postconsumer recycled content in plastic containers, and banning single-use plastic when there are alternatives.

Preserve forests, streams and wetlands for generations to come.

- In addition to the benefits of enhancing water quality, mental health, biodiversity and wildlife habitat, our natural environment holds the key to sequestering carbon from our atmosphere.
- Develop and enact plans to meet and exceed our land and water conservation goals as well as expand urban and suburban tree canopy, which will provide significant pollution reduction, stormwater control, and health benefits.

Additionally, this document contains 36 personalized public comments. We have highlighted a selection of these personal comments below.

Thank you for considering this public input.

Sincerely,

Shruti Bhatnagar Conservation Chair Sierra Club Maryland Chapter

Mariah Shriner Climate Campaign Representative Sierra Club Maryland Chapter



Selection of comments:

"I would like to see massive solar farms and offshore wind farms in Maryland so that we can have a real impact on carbon emmissions that are fueling climate change. Every new house should have solar panels, every public building and parking lot should have solar panels. There is no reason, other than profits for fossil fuel and utility companies, that we can't do this right now. Not only will it help with climate change, it is also an investment in energy independence and security. All counties and municipalities should be requiring solar panels on new buildings and funds should be provided for all public buildings and parking lots, so that we don't waste this precious free resource from the sun." – Suzanne Oshinsky, Bel Air, MD

"I am a Grandmother who wants a healthy environment for future generations." – Elizabeth McDonald, Chevy Chase, MD

"Incinerators are a major problem--they fill the air with pollution and do not resolve the problems of single use plastics and a non-regenerative economy. However, this problem still affects places like where I live because steps have not been taken to address climate across the board or environmental racism. I am Latino & live in a neighborhood that is 95% Black. The effects of fossil fuels and poor infrastructure development can be seen in neighborhoods like mine.

The state of Maryland needs to be at the forefront of the transition to a better, greener economy. We need to continue to invest in public transit, move away from fossil fuels, as well as protect and expand our public lands to ensure our children have green spaces which act as carbon sinks. We need to make cities that are for people, not cars, and tell the fossil fuel industry that they are not in charge anymore." – Kyrios LoNigro, Baltimore, MD

"Climate change is affecting most every community. The damages and increasing loss of economic productivity from it far outweigh other short term economic benefits." – Betty Krier, Takoma Park, MD

"The Climate Pathway can reduce future costs, enhance state revenue streams and equity. Please bring that home. Public transit raises property values & avoids future highway expansion costs. The Redline provides access to better jobs, advances equity, raises home values, and reduces vacant homes. Extending MARC to southern Maryland AND north to Elkton & will raise home values & save billions in highway construction. Making full-home electrification achievable for lower-income homes will also keep lower-income Marylanders in their homes & cut their heating and cooling costs. Modify policy in draft to enhance equity by getting trash incineration, biogas, & bio-mas out of the RPS and instead greatly expand composting organic waste (with its new jobs, reduction of fertilizers, enhanced rain absorption). Cut GHG by increasing plastic recycling and reducing single use plastic. Address coal's major presence in the Baltimore harbor & its impact on low-income communities and residents & GHG." – **Denise Davis, Baltimore, MD**

"I'm deeply concerned that Maryland is not going to meet the goals outlined in the Climate Solutions Now Act and even that may not be enough to do our part to mitigate the climate crisis. Right now our primary means of capturing carbon is with trees and we are continuing to lose trees, our primary means to capture carbon, due to extreme weather, invasive pests and plants, general stress and development. We must move faster if we have any chance of saving our wildlife and humanity." – Marie Laporte, Reisterstown, MD



"We must act quickly and decisively to mitigate the effects of climate change. Those actions must also take into account impacts to low income and communities of color." – Charles Huber, Westminster, MD

"Our children and grandchildren depend upon the positive environmental actions we take today. The health and safety of our planet can be restored if we cut climate pollution 60% by 2031. Each and everyone of us must become stewards of our Mother Earth, and the Maryland Department of Environment has a great deal of power to clean our air, water, and soil." – Barbara Winner, Arnold, MD

"This matters to me because I want a clean and healthy environment for my son and all the generations to come." – Amy Shepard, Annapolis, MD

"Electrifying rail and bus mass transit would entice more riders and be better for the environment. It would take cars off the overcrowded highways and justify rebuilding an intra and interstate rail system that would be viable alternatives to the current focus on individual ICE vehicles." – Edward Larkey, Baltimore, MD

"Please adopt a plan that includes renewable energy; better transit and bicycling options; and biodiversity conservation. Please tax the bigger SUVs. Please provide incentives for more composting. Please educate landscapers that fallen leaves belong under trees, otherwise how with the soil replenish itself? Thank you!" – Nic Kotschoubey, Bethesda, MD

"I love nature & I love my children & grandchildren. None will survive unless we act drastically now. Immediately. Comprehensively." – Sally Scherer, Catonsville, MD

"I see many children in the Baltimore area with asthma, much high than normal." – Lisa O' Connor, Towson, MD

"I believe that any housing or office project building plan submitted for development should be required to identify and meet climate actions such as: no use of gas or coal or oil for heating or cooking, a storm water management plan that retains and recycles water instead of directing it into storm drains, use of native plants and minimal use of lawns, provision of enough wind and solar arrays to generate power for at least 50% of the needs, bird safe design for all exposed glass surfaces and the collection and recycling of yard and food waste." – Dedra Salitrik, Frederick, MD

"We need to take back our wetlands and restore the native plants and animals there, in order to protect the rivers from siltation and pollution." – Kathleen Boyd, Leonardtown, MD

"Our climate is already changing for the worse - look at all the droughts, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires! Maryland must do its part to turn this around and make a better world for all of us!" – Cynthia Alden, Columbia, MD

"So many policy initiatives seem like more of the same--as yet again we have to fight against 270 expansion and other car centric development. We have an opportunity to a tally lead in climate preparedness instead of reacting 20 years too late. Rethink our infrastructure! Bring back our prairies! Reduce our waste! Our city just spent 3 months replacing slightly aged but functional pavement with new pavement--what a missed opportunity to apply advanced materials, like carbon absorbing cement, and regreening!" – M Azriel, Gaithersburg, MD



Full comments and signatories:

Melanie Odette, melanie_odette@yahoo.com 1812 Ocean Shore Dr Salisbury, MD 21801

I want to see more TREES and shade coverage! I would buy all the trees for our large backyard if someone would come put them in. (Husband and I are both disabled.) And lots of Wildflowers and plants that attract all our important pollinators – the butterflies, birds, and bats need to come back. Electric vehicles would be AWESOME, as would better public transportation. There's SO MUCH that needs to be done and no excuse why we're not seeing it get started. Let's go!

Sally Scherer, sschererjd@aol.com 707 Maiden Choice Ln Apt 7202 Catonsville, MD 21228

I love nature & I love my children & grandchildren. None will survive unless we act drastically now. Immediately. Comprehensively.

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Marc Imlay, marc.imlay@mdsierra.org 2321 Woodberry Dr # U Bryans Road, MD 20616

Kendra Epstein, kendra.f.epstein@gmail.com 7834 Muirfield Ct Potomac, MD 20854

Cynthia Hall, cynthiahall139@gmail.com 5 Over Ridge Ct Baltimore, MD 21210

Climate change is the number one problem/issue that the world faces right now. Maryland needs an action plan to mitigate this problem as soon as possible.



Nancy Lockwood, 5jklmn@msn.com 1500 White Tail Deer Ct Annapolis, MD 21409

Start today for a better tommorow.

Steve Draper, sbdrap@gmail.com 3783 Bear Creek Rd Accident, MD 21520

I like Winter in Garrett County !!!

M Azriel, msazriel@gmail.com 776 Kimberly Ct E Gaithersburg, MD 20878

So many policy initiatives seem like more of the same--as yet again we have to fight against 270 expansion and other car centric development. We have an opportunity to a tally lead in climate preparedness instead of reacting 20 years too late. Rethink our infrastructure! Bring back our prairies! Reduce our waste! Our city just spent 3 months replacing slightly aged but functional pavement with new pavement--what a missed opportunity to apply advanced materials, like carbon absorbing cement, and regreening!

Camilla Day, daycamilla@hotmail.com 6 Gerard Ct Rockville, MD 20850

There is clear evidence that climate change is already happening. To avoid a real climate disaster, need to act NOW.

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Stalling only pushes this huge problem down the road - STAND UP for the future generations and do something BOLD NOW!!!

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Leland Robinson, robinson942@comcast.net 2608 Monocacy Ford Rd Frederick, MD 21701

Saving Maryland, and the planet, from the effects of climate change must be our top priority. Nothing is more important.

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Mary Slaughter, mks.outside@gmail.com 9101 Eton Rd Silver Spring, MD 20901

Marc Petrequin, mcpetreq@gmail.com 507 Plaza Ct Apt 2A Aberdeen, MD 21001

David Goldblum, dkg5388@yahoo.com 611 Old Crossing Dr Pikesville, MD 21208

I would work with BGE to reduce their amount of coal in their operations as coal puts lots of greenhouse emissions. Thanks.



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Dominique Edmondson, dedmondson@cwa-union.org 10706 Wyld Dr Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Joe Sandri, jsandri9104@gmail.com 9104 Alton Parkway Silver Spring, MD 20910

Please require developers to preserve native trees and plants, and also to plant and verifiably maintain native tree groves, and to build less parking lots and roads and replace them with trails and micromobile (bike, pedestrian etc) options.

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Cheryl Fahlman, cfahlman@comcast.net 9224 Sandy Lake Cir Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Nic Kotschoubey, n.kotsch@ix.netcom.com 4978 Sentinel Dr Bethesda, MD 20816

Dear MDE, Please adopt a plan that includes renewable energy; better transit and bicycling options; and biodiversity conservation. Please tax the bigger SUVs. Please provide incentives for more composting. Please educate landscapers that fallen leaves belong under trees, otherwise how with the soil replenish itself? Thank you!

Laura Calvert, calvert.laura@gmail.com 5784 Morland Dr N Adamstown, MD 21710



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Emily Tippett, redskingrl01@yahoo.com 18 Oak Shadows Ct Catonsville, MD 21228

Irene Marsh, irenemarsh404@gmail.com 4912 40th Pl Hyattsville, MD 20781

This is too critical to delay. The dangers are real.

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Paul Eisenberg, eisenber@indiana.edu 6 Upland Rd Apt C Baltimore, MD 21210

Earth is in the midst of a climate crisis--and we need to do whatever we can to mitigate its effects.



Edward Larkey, edlarkey@icloud.com 2403 Everton Rd Baltimore, MD 21209

Electrifying rail and bus mass transit would entice more riders and be better for the environment. It would take vars off the overcrowded highways and justify rebuilding an intra and interstate rail system that would be viable alternatives to the current focus on individual ICE vehicles.

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Chris Von Stein, cvsisinthehouse@yahoo.com 2206 Badian Dr Silver Spring, MD 20904

Please do all you reasonably can to cut climate pollution and get us past fossil fuels. Thank you from Chris in Silver Spring

James Conklin, jbconklinjr@gmail.com 9039 Sligo Creek Pkwy Apt 114 Silver Spring, MD 20901

Climate change is an existential crisis for humanity and therefore all Maryland residents. Please act boldly and quickly to address it with substantive proposals!

Amy Shepard, aashepard94@gmail.com 738 Pearson Point Pl Annapolis, MD 21401

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Marie Laporte, marielaporte@verizon.net 2516 Chestnut Woods Ct Reisterstown, MD 21136

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Charles Huber, champ24daytona@comcast.net 1220 Owings Rd Westminster, MD 21157

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Tara Wilk, tara@shadowfirehosting.com 546 Norton Ln Arnold, MD 21012

Lisa O' Connor, lisa37oconnor@gmail.com 204 E Joppa Rd Apt 209 Towson, MD 21286

I see many children in the Baltimore area with asthma, much high than normal.

Dedra Salitrik, dedrasalitrik@gmail.com 2509 Mill Race Rd Frederick, MD 21701

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Barbara Winner, blwinner57@gmail.com 204 Baybourne Dr Arnold, MD 21012

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Katherine White, kcwd50@hotmail.com 17705 Hollingsworth Dr Rockville, MD 20855

Claudia Prather, cprather1949@gmail.com 210 Larch Ct Middletown, MD 21769

Everyone needs to start realizing that without the climate, none of us will survive. Ignore the climate it will go away.

Naomi Weisman, marketqn@verizon.net 7318 Greentree Rd Bethesda, MD 20817

Kyrios LoNigro, klonigro@tws.org 523 Mosher St Apt 2 Baltimore, MD 21217

Incinerators are a major problem--they fill the air with pollution and do not resolve the problems of single use plastics and a non-regenerative economy. However, this problem still affects places like where I live because steps have not been taken to address climate across the board or environmental racism. I am Latino & live in a neighborhood that is 95% Black. The effects of fossil fuels and poor infrastructure development can be seen in neighborhoods like mine.

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Leatra Harper, ahinz61@outlook.com 1427 Park Avenue Baltimore, MD 21217

-Power Maryland with 100% clean renewable energy.
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-Waste less; reduce, reuse, compost, and recycle more.
-Preserve forests, streams and wetlands for generations to come.

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Carole Flood, caroleflood19@yahoo.com 221 Roops Mill Rd Westminster, MD 21158

This plan must include a reconsideration of human interactions with wildlife, such as hunting policies. Maryland has taken the lead in many environmental policies and procedures. Integrating climate change into all government considerations is clearly a necessity. Marylanders can meet this challenge.

Pam Dehmer, auntpurple@gmail.com 928 Bergen Ct Bel Air, MD 21014

Maryland has passed some climate bills that seem strong but who is actually monitoring or making sure these bills are actually achieving the said goals? There seems to be no accountability in the climate bills from the past. Bold climate plans need to be not only passed and enacted but they need to be enforced.



Denise Davis, ddjdmls@msn.com 2419 Kentucky Ave Baltimore, MD 21213

The Climate Pathway can reduce future costs, enhance state revenue streams and equity. Please bring that home. Public transit raises property values & avoids future highway expansion costs. The Redline provides access to better jobs, advances equity, raises home values, and reduces vacant homes. Extending MARC to southern Maryland AND north to Elkton & will raise home values & save billions in highway construction. Making full-home electrification achievable for lower-income homes will also keep lower-income Marylanders in their homes & cut their heating and cooling costs. Modify policy in draft to enhance equity by getting trash incineration, biogas, & bio-mas out of the RPS and instead greatly expand composting organic waste (with its new jobs, reduction of fertilizers, enhanced rain absorption). Cut GHG by increasing plastic recycling and reducing single use plastic. Address coal's major presence in the Baltimore harbor & its impact on low-income communities and residents & GHG.

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Elizabeth McDonald, dean.mcdonald@me.com 3733 Chevy Chase Lake Dr Chevy Chase, MD 20815

I am a Grandmother who wants a healthy environment for future generations.

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Kathleen Boyd, katy.boyd123@icloud.com 20340 Beauvue Ct Leonardtown, MD 20650

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Cynthia Alden, cmalden2015@gmail.com 11909 New Country Ln Columbia, MD 21044

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Victoria Crawford, v.crawford639@gmail.com 639 Azalea Dr Rockville, MD 20850

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Please help us with the pollution.

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We need to do more to prevent a climate catastrophe.



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