

A Moment for Maryland Leadership: Defending Our Progress, Driving Our Future



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

Presented to the House Economic Matters and Environment & Transportation Committees
Presented by: Serena McIlwain, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment
December 15, 2025

A Federal Strategy of Erasure and Uncertainty

“Over the past 329 days, we are seeing attempts to ~~DELETE~~ climate change and environmental justice. Not just as priorities, but as phrases that cannot even be spoken.”

Key federal actions creating chaos and confusion:



- Elimination of consumer and business EV tax credits
- Massive cuts to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, stripping billions from communities
- Disruptions at the EPA creating regulatory confusion
- Environmental and climate data wiped from public websites

The Cost of Retreat is Paid by Maryland Families



+\$190/year

Projected increase in household energy bills by 2030 (rising to \$290 by 2035).



+\$140/year

Projected increase in vehicle fuel costs by 2030 (rising to \$300 by 2035).

This isn't relief or affordability. It is the cost of moving backwards.

Federal Rollbacks Shift Costs and Risks Directly to Our State



Transportation

Weakened fuel-economy protections.
Reversal of state clean-car and clean-truck standards.

Impact: More tailpipe pollution, increased asthma triggers, higher burden on vulnerable communities.



Power & Industry

Weakened emissions limits for power plants.
Reversal of interstate “Good Neighbor” ozone protections.
Canceled permits for offshore wind projects.

Impact: More cross-state air pollution, loss of clean energy jobs.



Public Health

Delays in phasing out harmful pollutants like HFCs.

Impact: Derails progress protecting households from toxic exposure.



Science & Data

Scaled-back greenhouse gas reporting requirements. Shutdown of key climate science programs.
Restricted access to public environmental data.

Impact: Communities lose transparency, markets lose confidence.

Maryland Is Fighting Back—And Moving Forward

Chaos is not a productive strategy. While the federal government retreats, Maryland is choosing a different path: **one of stability, investment, and leadership. We will not turn back.**



The Shield: Protecting Our Economy and Our People



Defending Against Pollution

We are upholding clean air and water standards that the federal government has weakened, protecting communities that already carry a heavier pollution burden.

Defending Against Costs

By investing in energy efficiency and expanding targeted relief programs, we help households lower their bills and insulate them from volatile fossil fuel markets.

Defending Against Uncertainty

We provide clear, stable rules for businesses, allowing investment to continue, projects to move forward, and jobs to be created.

The Catalyst: Securing Major Investments for Maryland's Future

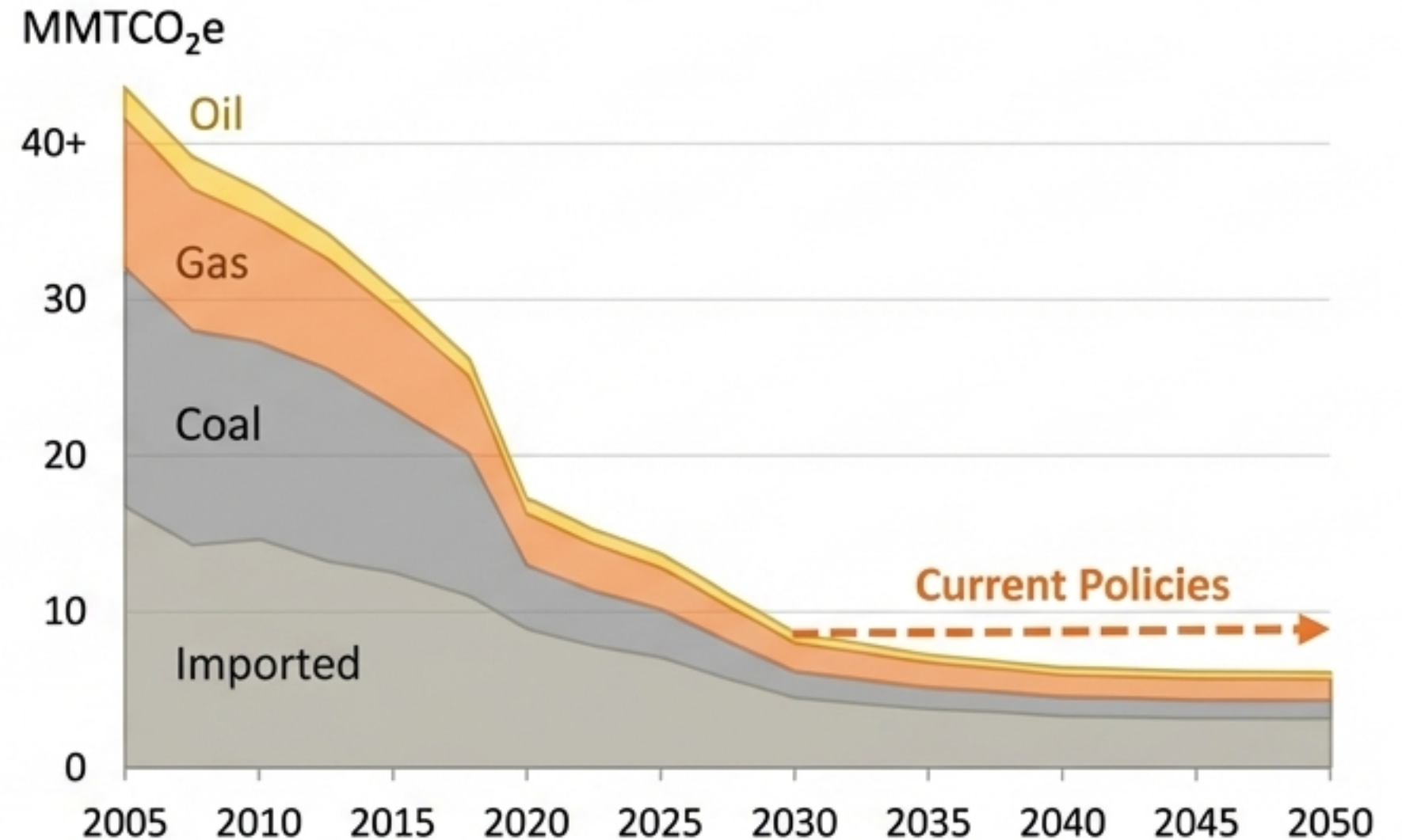


Our Progress Is Real, But the Headwinds Are Strong

29%

Maryland has achieved a 29% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2006 levels, on the path to our goal of 60% by 2031.

Maryland's Electricity Emissions



Since 2006, emissions from electricity have plummeted, accounting for two-thirds of our statewide reductions. Our policies are working.

Fact Check: Market-Based Climate Programs Drive Down Emissions, Not Hurt Consumers



The Myth

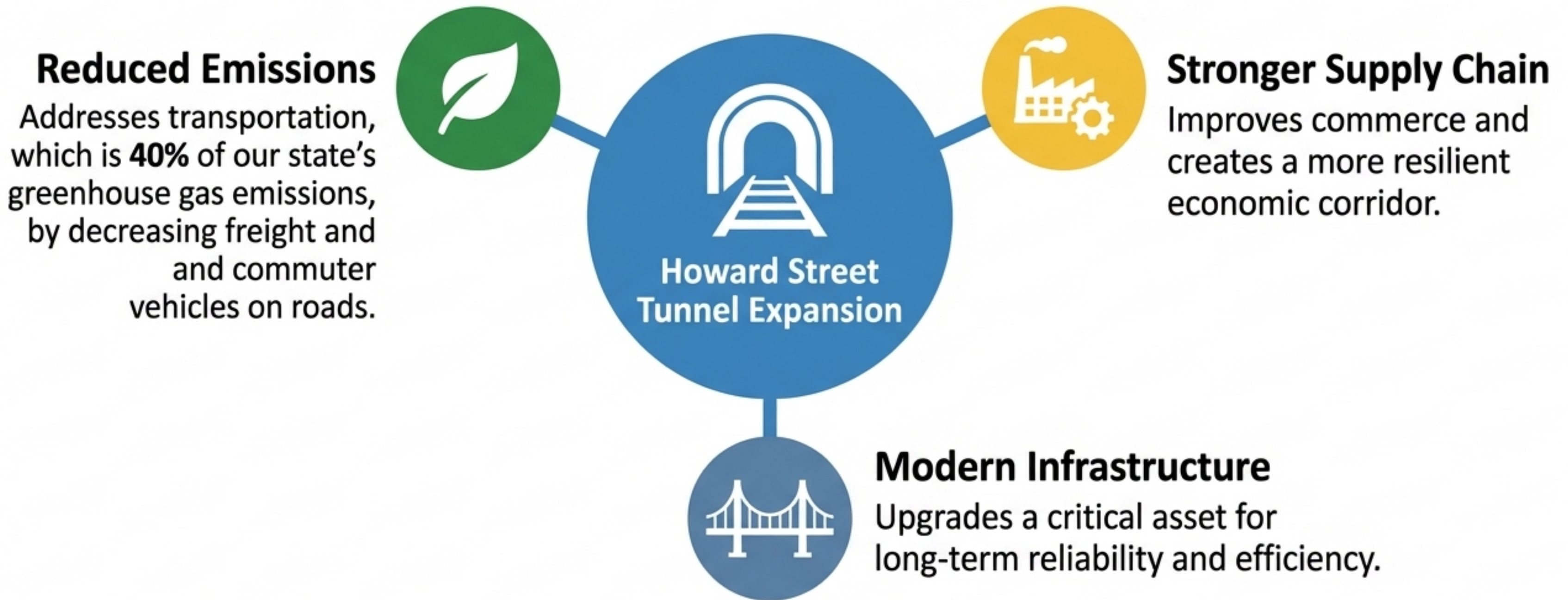
“Cap and Invest is just a ‘carbon tax’ that hurts Maryland families and businesses.”



The Reality

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a proven, market-based program that Maryland has participated in under both Republican and Democratic administrations. **The results are in:** emissions are falling, clean energy investments are growing, and Marylanders benefit directly. **Staying stuck on volatile fossil fuels is the real economic risk.**

Our Climate Investments Deliver Multiple Benefits for Maryland



This is our strategy: every dollar spent on climate action is also a dollar spent on a stronger economy, more reliable infrastructure, and healthier communities.

Affordability for Maryland Families Is Front and Center

While federal actions are projected to make energy and fuel **more** expensive, Maryland's strategy is designed to provide relief and long-term savings.

Maryland's Actions:

- Expanding targeted electricity rate relief for low and moderate-income families.
- Investing in energy efficiency programs (like Clean Heat and BEPS) to lower household bills over time.
- Giving families more choices with clean energy options to escape volatile fossil fuel prices.



**Maryland's Strategy:
Efficiency & Relief**

In Maryland, Environmental Justice is Non-Negotiable

“Maryland’s commitment to justice is not performative. It is operational. It is data-driven. And it is non-negotiable.”

– **Serena McIlwain**, Secretary,
Maryland Department of the Environment

Federal rollbacks disproportionately harm rural, frontline, and low-income communities. Our defense of Maryland’s progress is a defense of our most vulnerable citizens.

Maryland at a Crossroads: Leadership or Retreat?

The Path of Retreat



- Chaos
- Higher Costs
- More Pollution
- Uncertainty
- Economic Stagnation

The Path of Maryland Leadership



- Stability
- Investment
- Healthier Communities
- Long-Term Savings
- Economic Growth

We Will Continue to Lead

We stand firm in protecting our people, safeguarding our environment, defending our progress, and delivering a cleaner, healthier, more resilient future for ALL Marylanders.

This requires clarity, it requires collaboration, and it requires your continued partnership.

Contact Us



Website

mde.maryland.gov

Email

lisaa.jones@maryland.gov

Social Media

@md_environment

