January 28, 2021

**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 414: Climate Solutions Now Act**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The undersigned organizations express their strong support for SB 414: Climate Solutions Now Act and thank Senator Pinsky for his leadership on this environmental community priority legislation.

Every year the urgency of the climate crisis grows more pressing, and our window for taking the aggressive actions to mitigate against the worst effects grows shorter. It is no secret that Maryland’s more than 3,000 miles of shoreline and more than 265,000 acres of low-lying land make our state one of the most vulnerable to sea level rise and the effects of increasingly violent weather events. As the United States re-enters the Paris Climate Accord, it is critical that Maryland  shows leadership in climate policy, to demonstrate to the rest of the country what is possible.  The Climate Solutions Now Act puts us on this path, by advancing the following policies:

1. Increasing Maryland’s greenhouse gas reduction mandate to 60% by 2030 and net zero by 2045;
2. Charging the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities with determining what percent of Maryland’s climate funding must be spent in overburdened, underserved communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change emissions;
3. Creating a Worker Transition work group that will convene leaders in labor, industry, and policy makers to make recommendations to protect fossil fuel workers;
4. Planting 5 million trees, including 500,000 trees in underserved, urban communities;
5. Increasing our annual energy efficiency gains from 2% a year to 3% a year;
6. Improving air quality monitoring at landfills;
7. Requiring new state buildings to be net neutral and require efficiency gains in large residential and commercial buildings;
8. Purchasing new electric buses as the Maryland fleet turns over;
9. Prohibiting highway widening and unproven carbon capture and storage technology as emissions reduction pathways in our state climate planning;
10. Requiring accurate accounting of methane impacts and the use of best available scientific information in our climate plans.

This legislation is grounded in the understanding that climate justice is environmental justice. Climate change disproportionately impacts many low-wealth communities and communities of color, including impacts to health, local environment, and income. This bill will directly assist these communities in three primary ways:

1. Reduce harmful carbon emissions in order to improve public health;
2. Ensure a portion of state climate funds are spent on environmental justice communities;
3. Help create jobs at all levels;
4. Invest in tree-planting, focusing on underserved urban communities

We strongly urge a favorable report on this essential bill.