



Maryland Sierra Club 2021 Lobby Week – Key Bills

The Sierra Club’s key bills for the 2021 session focus on three crucial campaigns: a just transition to a clean energy economy; access to clean transportation for all; and moving toward zero waste.

Responsibly Move Maryland Beyond Coal; New Facilities Should Address Climate Change

Maryland should:

1) set a firm timetable for retiring Maryland’s coal power plants, and assist affected workers and communities (the “Maryland Coal Community Transition Act”; HB66/SB148¹); and

2) require the Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider climate impacts, as well labor issues, when approving new electricity generating facilities (“Utility Regulation – Consideration of Climate and Labor”; HB298/SB83²).

- Coal plants greatly damage public health and the environment because they are a major source of climate, water, and air pollution; 85% of Marylanders live in counties which fail to meet EPA healthy air standards for smog. Coal plant owners are announcing plans to stop their coal operations – Maryland now needs a statewide plan in place to secure a timetable for retirements and to support impacted workers and communities. Today, cheaper, cleaner energy is readily available.
- The PSC is responsible for approving new electricity generating facilities in Maryland, yet Maryland law currently does not require the PSC to consider climate impacts when doing so. This undermines Maryland’s ability to achieve the climate change mitigation targets established by the General Assembly.
- The principles of equity, justice, and inclusion require that workers and communities be protected as Maryland transitions to a clean energy economy.

Fund Maryland’s Transit Systems, and Electrify Maryland’s Public Bus Fleet

Maryland should:

1) provide desperately needed funding for public transit in Maryland (the “Transit Safety and Investment Act”; HB114/SB199³); and

¹ The lead sponsors of the coal transition bill are Delegate Brooks and Senator West.

² The lead sponsors of the PSC bill are Delegate Charkoudian and Senator Kramer.

³ The lead sponsors of the transit funding bill are Delegate Lierman and Senator McCray.

2) transition to electric buses (the “Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act”; HB334/SB137⁴).

- The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) operates buses, light rail, MARC, and paratransit, and funds transit systems throughout the state. MTA is facing a multi-billion-dollar funding shortfall for essential maintenance and critical enhancements.
- The transportation sector is the leading source of in-state greenhouse gases, and is a large contributor to air and water pollution. Reliable and safe public transit is essential to mitigate climate change, and to support workers as Maryland seeks to recover from the pandemic.
- Replacing diesel buses with electric buses presents a critical opportunity to slash pollution harmful to public health, reduce GHG emissions, and reduce oil dependence.

Ban Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bags, and Increase Reuse, Recycling, and Composting

Maryland should:

1) ban single-use plastic carryout bags statewide (the “Plastic Bag Reduction Act”; HB314/SB223⁵); and

2) require producer responsibility for the management of the end-of-life of their products, beginning with passage of the Maryland Paint Stewardship Program (HB127⁶).

- There is a global plastics pollution crisis. Approximately one trillion plastic carryout bags are used worldwide each year. They litter our land and waters endangering animals, marine life, and human health. Baltimore City, Howard County, and Montgomery County have enacted bills to reduce single-use plastic carryout bags, resulting in shoppers switching to reusable bags and sometimes no bag at all.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) makes producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products. The Maryland Paint Stewardship Program would increase collection, reuse, and recycling of architectural paint statewide, saving local governments money, while offering convenience for residents and adequate public oversight.

⁴ The lead sponsors of the bus electrification bill are Delegate Korman and Senator Zucker.

⁵ The lead sponsors of the plastic bag bill are Delegate Lierman and Senator Augustine.

⁶ The lead sponsor of the paint stewardship bill is Delegate Boyce.