



Require Climate-Based Decisionmaking by the PSC

House Bill 531 | Senate Bill 656



Did You Know?

- We are in a climate emergency, and in response, Maryland has enacted specific climate goals. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) requires us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a specified amount by 2030; and the Clean Energy Jobs Act requires us to increase reliance on renewable energy, and plan for achieving 100% renewable energy by 2040.
- Coal and gas plants are our state's #2 emitter of greenhouse gases.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for approving all new power plants in Maryland, yet the PSC does not consider the state's climate goals in its decisionmaking (as the PSC noted when it recently approved a new fracked gas power plant in Baltimoreⁱ).
- The U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that our planet has less than 10 years to transform the energy sector and take other steps to keep global warming below a disastrous 2°C increase.

Decisions on new MD power plants must be climate-based.

What This Bill Will Do:

- Directs the PSC, in its regulation of the electricity sector, to consider protection of the global climate from continued short-term and long-term warming, based upon best available scientific information recognized by the IPCC and achieving our state climate goals.
- Specifically, the PSC would be required to consider climate impacts when reviewing applications for new electricity generating facilities, and when it approves the sites for new facilities.
- State agencies similarly would need to consider climate impacts when providing input to the PSC regarding applications for new facilities.

Charting the Course to a Clean Renewable Energy Future:

- Maryland has taken important steps to advance clean energy, including approving offshore wind farms, and increasing the Renewable Portfolio Standard to grow our use of solar and wind energy.
- Legislation this session (SB __; HB __) would set a firm timetable for retiring the state's six coal plants, with a just transition for affected workers and communities. A second bill (SB __; HB __) would set a higher, science-based GGRA target for 2030 greenhouse gas reductions.
- Requiring the PSC to consider climate change closes a significant gap in our state's clean energy framework.
- Gas plants have multiplied in recent years, and the Governor proposes to expand use of fracked gas in Maryland. This fossil fuel's significant climate impacts must be considered if and when more gas plants are proposed.

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ⁱ https://webapp.psc.state.md.us/newIntranet/Casenum/NewIndex3_VOpenFile.cfm?FilePath=//Coldfusion/Casenum/9400-9499/9482/63.pdf, at 6. “[N]o part of § 7-207 [the CPCN criteria] explicitly requires . . . a discussion of climate change . . . and the [PSC] has never required that any consideration of climate change and its effects be included in a Proposed Order or CPCN proceeding.”