

The Green School Construction Act of 2022

If Maryland is to Achieve its Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals, Schools Must Transition off of Fossil Fuel Energy Systems. Buildings emit 40% of Maryland's greenhouse gases (13% of which are direct emissions). Maryland schools are overwhelmingly powered by gas fired and other fossil fuel based energy systems (1175 of 1184 schools). Transitioning schools to renewable energy systems (air and ground source heat pumps and solar) is critical to Maryland reaching statutory climate goals. And in the face of predicted dramatic increases in the cost of natural gas, critical to schools' ability to operate cost effectively.

What the Act Does: Based on a formula, all Maryland schools receive matching funds from the State through the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC). The proposed Green School Construction Act is designed to ensure that no schools receive matching dollars from the state/IAC for the installation of fossil fuel based energy systems (whether in new construction or replacement of existing systems) by defining them as "ineligible costs." Local Education Agencies (LEAs) can still choose to install fossil fuel based energy systems, but they would not be eligible for the state match.

The MCCC Predicts Dramatic Increase in Cost of Gas Delivery As Maryland Transitions to Decarbonized Buildings. The IAC already encourages school districts to set targets to increase renewable energy and to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and in particular requires schools to perform life cycle costs and evaluations of alternative energy systems before being allowed to use State funds for installation of fossil fuel systems. However, thus far, in doing those analyses, schools have not factored in the predicted dramatic cost increases for gas delivery systems.

The MCCC has projected that gas delivery rates could increase more than 2 to five times the current rate for consumers left on the gas system, making it all the more important from a cost perspective alone that all Maryland schools transition from fossil fuels. See MCCC [Building Energy Transition Plan](#).

We owe it to our children and grandchildren to transition our schools from fossil fuels. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that we are still on the trajectory of catastrophic global warming of 2.7 celsius by century's end. Even if we stopped emitting greenhouse gases today, the gases we have already emitted will linger in the atmosphere for decades and continue to cause global warming. If we are to limit global warming to 1.5 celsius -- the goal set in the Paris Climate Accord -- we need a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. ***The 2020's are the only decade we have left to make that target.***¹ And, to be clear, meeting the target of 1.5 celsius of warming is only the best *bad* decision we have--it still promises sea level rise, more powerful storms, devastating wildfires, and sharp species decline. If we don't sufficiently reduce emissions this decade, we will set off a domino effect of escalating disasters.

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1

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/27082019/12-years-climate-change-explained-ipcc-science-solutions/>