



P.O. Box 278
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Maryland Sierra Club 2022 Lobby Night – Highlights of Key Bills

The Chapter's key bills for the 2022 session focus on three crucial campaigns:

- Amending the Maryland State Constitution to provide the right to a healthful environment,
- Enacting legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the most important sources in the state, and
- Protecting and supporting Maryland's natural lands and parks.

Bill numbers are provided where they are available.

Environmental Human Rights Amendment

The proposed amendment would provide:

- A. That each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful and sustainable environment, and said right shall not be infringed.
- B. That the State, as trustee, shall protect, conserve, and enhance Maryland's natural resources, including its air, lands, waters, wildlife, and ecosystems, for the benefit of both present and future generations.

The bill (HB 596; SB number expected shortly) is sponsored by Del. Wanika Fisher and Sen. Will Smith, who Chairs the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, which has jurisdiction in the Senate.

To be adopted, the proposed Amendment will need to receive a three-fifths vote in both houses of the General Assembly and then be approved by voters on the ballot next November.

Several other states—including Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Montana, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island—provide a similar level of environmental protection.

New York voters approved its version of the amendment in November 2021, with nearly 69 percent voting in favor.

The Amendment has support in Maryland from a wide set of racial and social equity, environmental, public health, and faith organizations, including the NAACP, League of Women Voters, League of Conservation Voters, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland Public Health Association, and Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and many other faith-based entities.

By elevating the right to a healthful environment to the same level as such fundamental rights as freedoms of the press, religion, and speech, the Amendment would provide constitutionally based protections in addition to those set forth in existing environmental laws and regulations. It would also empower Maryland residents to hold state and local governments accountable for violations of their environmental rights.

The Amendment also makes explicit the State's role as a steward for future generations.

The Amendment is expected to provide significant benefit to marginalized areas of the state that have borne disproportionate health impacts from pollution and other environmental degradation.

Contrary to opponents' assertions, other states' amendments have not led to substantial litigation. Rather, they help set a foundation for constructive governance.

2022 Climate Solutions Legislation

This is a critical time for states to take the lead on addressing climate change. We need to establish strong overarching goals, create strong policies to reduce pollution from our buildings, transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, shift to electric vehicles, and ensure these policies are equitable in their impacts and benefits. While Maryland has taken some bold steps, there is much more to do, and it will require significant legislation and administrative work.

Sierra Club and more than twenty other environmental, community, and social equity organizations have worked to promote a bold package of climate legislation that spans around a dozen bills in the House and the Senate. It is critical that we not just pass climate legislation, but we pass good legislation, and we are asking everyone to engage with the details and commit to the strongest policies and targets that are feasible.

Here we will focus on what Sierra Club believes should be prioritized in 2022.

In 2022 climate legislation should:

- Set strong goals for the state, in line with the newest science. That means committing to a 60 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2045. The legislation should also launch several new programs to help get us there, including:
- Reduce pollution from our buildings, which are the 3rd largest source of climate pollution in the state.
 - All new buildings built in Maryland should be all-electric (no burning of fossil fuels on site) and highly energy efficient.
 - Launch a program to reduce pollution from existing buildings by at least 30% by 2030, net zero by 2040.
- Time-specific goals to transition school buses, state vehicles and large trucks to electric.
- Promote equity in allocation of climate funding.

In the Senate



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The Climate Solutions Now Act, SB528, is the most important climate bill in this chamber, and addresses many of the goals we discussed. We are reviewing the bill to identify any changes, but right now we want to build strong support, and ensure that the key provisions are retained and not weakened.

The Sierra Club and partners will have some changes we will be requesting when we testify on the 15th, and we can share these earlier if you are interested. But right now we are asking for your strong, vocal support.

In the House

There will be several bills which pertain to the issues we raised above.

- We urge your support for HB708, from Chair Barve. This bill sets the goal of 60% reduction by 2032 and net-zero by 2045, commits to evaluate new and existing programs through equity lens, creates new programs with workgroups to make recommendations on just-transition for workers and equitable spending for programs. **Can we count on your support for HB708?**
- We urge your support for HB806 and HB831, introduced by Delegate Dana Stein, which establish all-electric building standards and the “building performance standards” for public and private buildings.
- o help reduce pollution from existing buildings. We have not seen final details, but we have heard they will be strong. **Do you have any questions or concerns with this type of policy?**

Zero-Emission Truck Act of 2022

Transportation is the #1 source of climate change emissions so we really need to focus on addressing pollution from this sector.

Trucks account for 10% of vehicles on the road but contribute **30% of greenhouse gas emissions** and 57% of particulate matter emitted by the entire transportation sector.

We know that people who are heavily exposed to these pollutants are at a greater risk for developing asthma and lung cancer. Therefore we think it is important that the General Assembly pass legislation to adopt the Zero-Emission Truck Rule of 2022 (HB829; Senate bill number will be available shortly. Del. Sara Love and Sen. Ronald Young are the sponsors.)

The rule would require that vehicle **manufacturers sell an [increasing annual percentage of new zero-emission trucks and school buses](#)** through 2035 which would reduce climate pollution and improve air quality.

These standards for trucks were adopted by California, which has the ability to create its own air quality standards through waivers they receive from EPA.

Other states can opt into these standards and since California [adopted the regulation](#) in 2020, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington have adopted this rule.

Governor Hogan signed a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2020 for Maryland to join D.C., and over a dozen other states in a commitment to make 30% of all truck sales electric by 2030.

(Additional points to bring up if there are questions on it):

- The regulation applies to any vehicle manufacturer (such as Volvo, Cummins, Mack, and Daimler) that wants to sell trucks and school buses in the state of Maryland.
- Over the lifetime of the vehicle, many electric trucks are currently cost-competitive with diesel trucks due to fuel savings and lower maintenance costs.
- The regulation doesn't require fleet operators to buy the trucks but a complementary regulation being developed in California would set requirements for large operators like UPS, Amazon, etc. to purchase them.

Lands and Parks legislation

The Senate and House are developing legislation (sponsored by Del. Eric Luedtke and Sen. Sarah Elfreth), which we expect will be titled the Maryland the Beautiful Act, that would set a goal of protecting 30 percent of Maryland's lands by 2030 and 40 percent by 2040.

The legislation would also

- strengthen support and funding for private land trusts that seek to provide green space in underserved and urban areas, and
- provide funding for stewardship of private forestland, where the majority of Maryland forests are located.

Related legislation (the Great Maryland Outdoors Act: HB727/SB 541) would increase funding for the state park system to:

- expand access for everyone, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities
- target transportation investments to avoid capacity shutdowns
- reduce the maintenance backlog and hire more park employees
- address related recommendations of the recent Report of the State Park Investment Commission.