



# Require Climate-Sensitive Decisionmaking by the PSC

House Bill 298 | Senate Bill 83



## Did You Know?

- Maryland has established specific climate goals to address the existential threat posed by our warming planet. These include a target for reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and achieving 100% renewable energy by 2040.
- Coal and gas plants are our state's no. 2 emitter of greenhouse gases.
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) is responsible for approving all new Maryland power plants, yet the PSC currently does not consider climate change or the state's climate goals. In 2019, in its decision approving a new fracked gas power plant in Baltimore, the PSC took the position that climate change is not a factor allowed by state law.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.

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**Decisions on new MD power plants must protect the climate**

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## 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 based upon achieving Maryland's climate goals.
- Specifically, the PSC would be required to consider climate impacts when reviewing applications for new electricity generating facilities. State agencies similarly would need to consider climate impacts when providing input to the PSC regarding applications for new facilities.
- The legislation also supports Maryland gas and electric company workers by requiring gas and electric companies to disclose wages and benefits for various job classifications.

## 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 (HB 66 | SB 148) will establish firm dates for retiring the state's coal plants, and a just transition fund to support affected workers and communities. A second bill will establish more aggressive, science-based targets for Maryland 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. This fossil fuel's significant climate impacts must be considered if and when more gas plants are proposed.

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<sup>i</sup> In its 2019 decision (Order No. 89211, Case No. 9482), the PSC stated: “[N]o part of § 7-207 [of the Public Utilities Article, which identifies the CPCN criteria for approving new power plants,] 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.”