Recommendations to the Mitigation Work Group

of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change

Thank you to the Chairs of the Mitigation Work Group for the opportunity to submit the below recommendations for the Maryland Commission on Climate Change's 2020 Annual Report. Please find below recommendations endorsed by The Natural Resources Defense Council, Maryland League of Conservation Voters and the Maryland/DC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

Emissions Targets

- Adopt more ambitious economy-wide GHG emission reduction targets for Maryland of:
    - *at least* 50% by 2030, and
    - net-zero emissions no later than 2045; and
    - Adopt and/or set in place a firm process and timeline for developing mitigation policies needed to achieve these targets.
- The General Assembly should set forth a 100% clean energy by 2040 plan that is made up of clean, renewable electricity from wind, solar, and storage technologies, and focused on providing the benefits of clean energy to overburdened and underserved communities first.

Carbon Accounting and Reporting

- Include the 100- and 20-year global warming potential (GWP) in accounting and reporting for each section. This will allow the State to understand and weigh tradeoffs in program development and implementation based on impacts and will help inform stakeholders about different impacts over varied time frames.
- MDE should update its reporting and benchmarking emissions inventories and the General Assembly should update climate action laws to evaluate the warming potential of methane pollution based on modern science, including an infrastructure leakage rate of at least 3 percent and the 20-year warming potential associated with methane emissions.

Regional Approaches

Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI)

- Maryland should lead in the interstate (TCI) discussions to develop, finalize, adopt, and implement an ambitious, equitable, and sustainable regional transportation cap-and-invest program that creates a new source of funding for clean transportation solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions; enhance public health protections, particularly for fence-line and frontline environmental justice communities; and rebuild our economy by creating new clean energy and clean transportation jobs.
- The program must include strong safeguards and standards, including explicit commitments and mechanisms to invest TCI program proceeds in mass transit and other equitable and sustainable transportation solutions not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also to deliver needed public health benefits to environmental justice communities, rural communities, and others, and to grow clean energy and clean transportation jobs.
- Specifically, Maryland should ensure that the TCI program and its implementation of it includes:
    - Enhanced, genuine outreach to underserved and overburdened communities on the design and implementation of the program, including investment priorities;
    - A guaranteed percentage of program benefits from the program going to underserved and overburdened communities (e.g., New York's Climate Leadership and Community

Protection Act requires 35 to 40 percent of the state's climate program investments to go to these communities);
    - Ambitious pollution reductions through adoption of a strong transportation carbon cap consistent with achieving at least a 50% reduction in Maryland's GHG emissions economy wide by 2030 and net-zero emissions by no later than 2045, both of which will require significant reductions in transportation emissions;
    - Sustained tracking to ensure local benefits, including local criteria pollutant reduction, improved public health, job creation, and other benefits are achieved; and
    - Continuous reporting, monitoring, transparency, and program improvements to ensure the TCI program achieves equitable and sustainable outcomes.
- To address the urgent threat of climate change and provide these benefits to Maryland's communities, the TCI program should begin as soon as possible, ideally by 2022.

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)

- Maryland should work with the other RGGI states to ensure that RGGI's third regional program review begins as soon as possible—ideally before the end of 2020, and no later than January 2021. Maryland should also champion additional program improvements, including a more ambitious cap, as part of this next program review to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions; enhance public health protections, particularly for fence-line and frontline environmental justice communities; and rebuild our economy by creating new clean energy jobs.

Transportation

Transit/Public Transportation

- Based on the Maryland Transit Administration's Capital Needs Inventory, reintroduce or modify the Transit Safety & Investment Act of 2019 (HB 368) to repair/replace MTA equipment to gradually bring down the backlog of deferred maintenance projects over the next six years.
- Based on adjustments to the Electric Bus Transition Act of 2019 (HB 432), mandate that starting in 2024 all bus replacements be zero-emissions buses.
- Ensure that future federal response or recovery aid for public transportation improves worker protections through hazard pay, sick leave, etc.

Private Vehicles

- Support the strongest vehicle emission standards legally possible for light, medium and heavy duty vehicles in Maryland and oppose federal efforts to rollback clean vehicle standards, including higher standards adopted by Maryland and other states under Clean Air Act section 177.
- Develop programs and policies to promote and/or require charging infrastructure in multi-family dwellings.
- Support continued and expanded incentives for purchase of zero emissions vehicles; design incentives to benefit low-income/underserved/overburdened populations
- Complete study on barriers to purchase of zero emissions vehicles and identify potential mechanisms to reduce the barriers.
- Propose study on impact of rideshare companies/apps on greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate and Environmental Justice

- MDE should work with the public, other agencies, and the General Assembly to identify environmental and climate justice communities and the threats those individual communities are facing. To supplement that practice, complete a thorough community environmental equity analysis

regarding the impact of its suite of climate action policies, programs and proposals on communities of color, low-income communities, communities historically overburdened by pollution, and communities underserved by our historic energy and transportation systems.

Expand Sequestration

- Develop a sequestration mandate, based on the technical study completed by the Harry R Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, with approved techniques to increase sequestration. Focus on why our sequestration has remained consistent over the course of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan. Potentially to be discussed in conjunction with the Adaptation Working Group.

PSC Engagement

- Reintroduce HB 531 (2019) that requires the Public Service Commission to take a more active role in energy planning and elevate climate change as a component of all decision making.

Energy Storage -

- Require the Public Service Commission to complete a cost-benefit analysis of energy storage that incorporates energy and non-energy benefits as well as avoided costs from storage deployment.
- Develop a megawatt or megawatt hour storage mandate based on peak shaving/shifting and integration of renewable sources. Other states have used 5% of summer peak energy to develop their goals.
- Develop a three-pronged incentive approach to battery storage funded through:
    - Up-front rebates;
    - Performance incentives (eg. energy efficiency, utility demand response); and
    - Access to low-cost financing.

Grid Modernization and Long-Term Function

- The Commission on Climate Change should strongly recommend that the Public Service Commission and other relevant agencies and commissions participate in a detailed study around the current function of our grid and necessary changes to create a more customer-centered, affordable, reliable and environmentally sustainable energy system. The PSC can draw heavily on the experience of the PC-44 process to address current and predicted issues related to resilience, reliability, cost, deep decarbonization and technological advancements.
- In order to meet the state's emission goals and unless and until there is a system wide analysis of energy consumption and need including long-term grid analysis, the Governor and General Assembly should immediately halt the construction or permitting of any gas-fired power plants in the state that are not already online and fully operational.

Raise the Net Metering Cap

- Double the net metering cap to 3,000 MW to accommodate continued growth of the Community Solar Program and roof top solar projects.

Coal Plant Transition

- The Commission on Climate Change should recommend that the General Assembly establish a clear, enforceable schedule to responsibly manage Maryland's transition off its remaining coal-fired power

plants by no later than 2030, including the creation of a workforce and community transition plan to support laid-off workers and impacted communities, following the recommendations within Appendix I of the Draft GGRA Plan and further implementing the General Assembly's intent to "...eliminate carbon-fueled generation from the state's electric grid..." as codified in §7–702 (a)(2) of the Public Utilities Article.

Decarbonization of Buildings:

- In response to the September 11, 2020 draft report from the Buildings SubGroup, *Decarbonizing Buildings in Maryland - Buildings SubGroup Report to the Mitigation Work Group*, the below positions reflect the current stance on the proposed Recommendations from the report:
  - Recommendation 1 -- Support
  - Recommendation 2 -- Support
  - Recommendation 3 -- Support with a strong Preference for Option A
  - Recommendation 4 -- Support with a strong Preference for Option A
  - Recommendation 5 -- Support
  - Recommendation 6 -- Neutral
  - Recommendation 7 -- Support
  - Recommendation 8 -- Support