



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MARYLAND, INC.

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 323 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization
Position - Support

February 9, 2016

Members of the League of Women Voters of Maryland and the national League have repeatedly expressed our concerns about global climate change and its detrimental impacts on our environment, our communities, our health, our economy and the future of the Earth.

Passage of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act (SB 323) is a critical step if we are to continue a coherent strategy to slow or stop Maryland's contribution to emissions of carbon, methane and nitrous oxide from fossil fuels into the Earth's atmosphere. We support the adoption of a new goal to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 40% over 2006 levels by 2030 through the development of the Maryland Department of the Environment's proposed plan that would be due Dec. 31, 2018.

The state of Maryland is reaching a crisis point. Over 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline make Maryland one of the most vulnerable states in the nation when it comes to sea level rise. The Annapolis and Baltimore waterfronts and Ocean City face frequent flooding today. Over 13 inches of rainfall set a record for Baltimore for the wettest June in 2015.

With passage of SB 323, MDE will be able to build upon its work and the work of the Maryland Climate Change Commission that identified and sought solutions to the potentially catastrophic problems we face from increasing fossil fuel emissions. The new goal of a 40% reduction by 2030 will go a long way toward accomplishing substantial carbon emissions and put Maryland on a trajectory to meet higher goals in future decades.

We also face the hard fact that the impacts of climate change fall relentlessly on our poorest communities. Creation of a Maryland Climate Change Commission task force to oversee an economic study that includes participation by representatives of low-income and minority communities has the potential to develop programs and plans that will benefit the economy of these communities. Overall, SB 323 has the potential to save lives, improve livelihoods and lead to a livable future for people of the state.

Nancy Soreng, Co-President, LWVMD