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PRESS RELEASE

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Governor O'Malley Commits to Strong Action on Global Warming

ANNAPOLIS – Environment Maryland issued high praise today for Gov. Martin O'Malley, Sen. Paul Pinsky, and Del. Kumar Barve for moving forward with strong legislation to address global warming in Maryland. Gov. O'Malley announced today that he will be a lead sponsor of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, which environmental, faith, health, and business groups have been pushing for the last two years. The bill will protect Maryland's environment and economy while also spurring strong action at the federal level to address global warming nationwide.

The bill requires reductions in statewide greenhouse gas emissions of 25% from 2006 levels by 2020, and directs the Maryland Department of the Environment to craft a plan and a timeline to achieve those goals.

“Having Maryland join six other states in calling for statewide reductions is a major step forward, and I appreciate the Governor taking a leadership role,” said Sen. Pinsky. “The more states that take an aggressive role in reducing greenhouse gases, the greater the pressure on the U.S. Congress to take a similarly strong position.”

“This law will put Maryland at the forefront of controlling greenhouse gas emissions and should push the federal government to follow our lead and get serious about this issue,” said Del. Barve.

The bill follows the recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, established by Governor O'Malley in 2007, and closely resembles the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008. The commission offered 42 specific policy proposals to achieve the 2020 reductions, and the authors emphasized the importance of those early and aggressive actions if we hope to mitigate future global warming.

“We are delighted that Gov. O'Malley sees the opportunity to address the critical problem of global warming and boost our economy with clean energy jobs at the same,” said Tommy Landers, Policy Advocate with Environment Maryland. “This is the ‘get smart’ bill for energy and transportation. It will force us to roll out clean energy and smart transportation policies in a coordinated fashion.”

Governor O'Malley and his staff at MDE worked tirelessly in the past couple months to help craft the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act. MDE facilitated dozens of hours of negotiations involving major Maryland groups and individuals with a stake in climate policy. Parties included labor leaders, manufacturers, and the environmental community. This final agreement, if passed without major amendments, will represent a huge and culminating step in Maryland's multi-year efforts to address global warming. The bill would add Maryland to six other states that have set mandatory statewide emission reduction levels (CA, WA, HI, CT, MA, NJ).

While cutting greenhouse gas pollution, the bill will simultaneously help boost our state's ailing economy. The commission's 42 policy options include everything from better land use to green buildings to expanded recycling. Several key reductions policies have in fact already been passed by the General Assembly, including the state's renewable electricity standard and the clean cars law. All told, the commission estimates a net \$2 billion in savings will be realized in the state under this comprehensive emissions reduction approach.

"With this legislation, Maryland is choosing to be a leader in the fight against global warming. This will put us ahead of the curve on developing clean energy solutions, which will provide lasting environmental and economic benefits to the state," Landers said.

If this bill passes, Maryland will have achieved the lion's share of its responsibility in addressing the climate crisis. Still, the overall job will be incomplete without swift action from the U.S. Congress to cap nationwide carbon pollution at the levels determined by international scientific consensus. Such a cap, if properly structured, would complement the Maryland bill by regulating industries not covered in the early years by the state bill, including the state's carbon-intensive manufacturing sector. At the federal level, any financial burden on the manufacturing sector can be offset through tariffs on imported products, a mechanism that is not possible at the state level. Any federal cap must be fair and create a level playing field for all economic sectors.

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