

**Testimony for HB315 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2009**

February 27, 2009

Presented to: House Economic Matters Committee; Chair  
Chair: Dereck E. Davis  
House Environmental Matters Committee;  
Chair: Maggie McIntosh

POSITION: Support

I am Clareen Heikal of Cheverly, Maryland, Prince George's County. I am here to speak in support of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2009 (HB315) on behalf of Progressive Cheverly. Progressive Cheverly is a grassroots organization that promotes a variety of social and political issues through informed political dialogue and active participation in the democratic process.

We wish to thank our District 47 delegates, Jolene Ivey, Doyle Niemann, and Victor Ramirez for being co-sponsors for HB 315.. We also thank House Majority Leader Kumar Barve for championing this bill along with Governor O'Malley.

Environmental issues are a major focus for Progressive Cheverly's legislative and community involvement on both local and state levels. All of these experiences over the years have only strengthened our commitment to push for passage of environmental bills such as HB315.

How do we know Human activity causes warming?

We know that CO2 molecules from burning fossil fuels are different from CO2 emitted from natural conditions, and that CO2 levels from fossil fuels have been increasing in proportion to increased land use, energy use, and population growth. These changes are superimposed on the natural climate fluctuations.

What Can we Do?

The most important action that we (governments, businesses, and individuals) can take to minimize global warming is to **decrease emissions** of earth's heat-trapping gases such as CO2 and methane. Many individuals in Cheverly are already taking actions to use energy efficient products and renewable energy, protect and restore forests (which store CO2), use mass transit, and drive less. We feel that it of utmost importance for Maryland to pass the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act 2009 now.

The provisions in HB315 appear to be very accommodating to many sectors in the Maryland communities. Several provisions particularly appeal to us. One is the stipulation that there will not be a disproportional impact on low to low-moderate income or minority communities. This is especially important to those of us who live inside the beltway. Second, is a stipulation that the provisions of this bill will not directly cause loss of existing jobs in the manufacturing sector. Hopefully, many new green jobs will be created and available for the people who live in our area

It is our understanding that previous legislation already signed into law (Health Air Act, Clean Cars Act, etc) that will take us 70% of the way towards meeting the goal of a 25% reduction of greenhouse gas by 2020. Maryland's Commission of Climate Change has shown that emissions can be reduced at least by 25% of 2006 levels by 2020 while achieving a net economic savings statewide of \$2 billion. (Refer to: [www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/Air/ClimateChange/Chapter4.pdf](http://www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/Air/ClimateChange/Chapter4.pdf) )

For encouragement, let me paraphrase what Governor Schwarzenegger of California said in 2007. He said that the new global warming standards set in his state spurred business, not harmed it. Also, the Solar Energy Industries Association recently estimated that the new government stimulus will create 67,00 jobs nationwide in the solar industry this year alone. Any stimulus to Maryland from the Federal government should help shore up our state's investments in clean energy.

The Washington Post wrote on Feb 24, 2009, that the Obama administration is exploring ways to establish a national standard for greenhouse gas emissions from cars. This initiative has the positive support from spokespersons for the automobile industry such as Greg Martin for General Motor and Gloria Bergquist for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers. Also, take note that all of President Obama's appointees for Energy positions and his science advisors strongly agree that there should be mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions in order to avert catastrophic climate changes.

Maryland should act **boldly** to pass this bill, so as to give the Federal government a much needed push to pass **bold standards** for greenhouse gas emissions. When the Maryland cap on emissions sunsets in 2016, Maryland then will be able to re-assess the situation and make adjustments.

We here in Maryland should have the vision to be "on this band wagon" rather than trying to jump on after we have been left behind. We strongly urge passage of HB315. Let's all get on board to get the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act of 2009 on Governor O'Malley's desk as soon as possible.

Clareen Heikal