The Clean Energy Jobs Act

Increasing Maryland's Renewable Energy Goal to 25% by 2020

Over half of Maryland's electricity still comes from carbon-spewing fossil fuels—coal and natural gas. Using polluting energy sources hurts our health, our economy, and our climate. 75% of Marylanders live in areas that received a D or F air quality grade for ozone pollution from the American Lung Association, and the state notoriously has some of the worst ground-level ozone pollution in the eastern U.S.

Clean, renewable energy has proven itself to be a powerful driver of economic development in Maryland, including job creation. Using more renewable energy will give Maryland cleaner air and water, helping to protect its residents from the harm of fossil fuel pollution. That's why a broad and diverse coalition of environmentalists, public health officials, business leaders, labor leaders, faith leaders, academics, low-income advocates, and social justice advocates have come together to call on Maryland's leaders to increase the state's renewable energy goal to 25% by 2020.

In 2016 Maryland's General Assembly passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act. Unfortunately, Governor Hogan later vetoed the bill. Maryland's General Assembly needs to vote for the Clean Energy Jobs Act this year to override the veto.

The benefits of the Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act

Increasing the amount of clean, renewable energy—like solar and wind—will benefit our health, our economy, and our climate. The Clean Energy Jobs Act will put more renewable energy on the grid, especially when it comes to clean solar and wind.

Source: bikeriderlondon/Shutterstock, Inc.

Health Benefits

Fossil fuel combustion is a public health crisis. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the 4th leading cause of death in Maryland. Air pollution from old, outdated, and dirty energy is costing Marylanders. These health burdens disproportionately harm low-income populations and communities of color.

Increasing Maryland's renewable energy goal to 25% by 2020 will significantly improve the state's air quality, preventing 25 to 50 premature deaths per year and will increase regional economic growth between $200 million and $450 million annually due to better health outcomes.[i]

Creating Family-Supporting Jobs

By increasing our renewable energy goal to 25% by 2020, Maryland is poised to stimulate a statewide resurgence of manufacturing and construction jobs. Renewable energy has already created jobs and helped diversify Maryland's economy. New solar construction that would result from the Clean Energy Jobs Act would total $150 million annually in GDP growth.[ii]

The Clean Energy Jobs Act also will establish a working group among government agencies and clean energy stakeholders to examine the best funding opportunities to invest in job training in the clean energy industry, and to remove barriers for entry in this industry by minority-owned and women-owned businesses. In addition, it makes small minority-owned and women-owned businesses in this industry eligible to receive dedicated funding for market growth through the state's "Strategic Energy Investment Fund."

Climate Benefits

A 25% renewable energy goal will create incentives for roughly 1,300 megawatts of new clean energy in our region and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 2.7 million metric tons per year. That's the carbon equivalent of taking 563,000 passenger vehicles off the road every year, all while delivering improved public health outcomes, cleaner air and cleaner water.

Source: U.S. Department of Defense

Reliability Benefits

Weather in our region is getting more intense, and our electricity grid is increasingly compromised by climate-related hazards, including more intense storms and heat waves. Dispersed and locally generated electricity that doesn't emit greenhouse gases is a more sustainable solution to our energy needs than our current system of centralized, polluting power plants. More renewable energy will make our electricity grid more resilient and keep our lights on, even during increasingly extreme weather events.

Source: U.S. Deparmtment of Defense

A Small Price to Pay

An independent analysis of the Clean Energy Jobs Act estimated that increasing Maryland's renewable energy use to 25% by 2020 would cost residential customers 58 cents per month in 2020. For less than a penny per day investment per resident, the renewable energy expansion would prevent up to 50 deaths annually and increase net economic growth by up to $600 million per year due to better health outcomes and new solar construction, while creating new Maryland jobs.[iii]

For more information or to volunteer, contact us:
Web - www.sierraclub.org/maryland/legislation
Email - Legislation@MDSierra.org

---

[i] Based on data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Avoided Emissions and Generation Tool (AVERT), Co-Benefits Risk Assessment Screening (COBRA) model, and Jobs and Economic Development Indicator (JEDI). Assumes 1,288 MW of wind development and 219 MW of solar development as a result of this bill
[ii] http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/mch/Documents/Asthma_in_Maryland-2011.pdf
[iii] Sustainable Energy Advantage, LLC. Estimated Ratepayer Impact of Increasing the MD RPS. 1.7.2016