



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH &
PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

March 27, 2019

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Trans
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dereck E. Davis
Chair, Economic Matters
House Office Building, Room 231
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs
Miller Senate Office Bldg, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT House Bill 277/ Senate Bill 249** *Regional Initiative to Limit or Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Transportation Sector - Authorization (Regional Transportation and Climate Protection Act of 2019)*

Dear Chair Barve, Chair Davis and Chair Pinsky;

The Children's Environmental Health & Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC) respectfully submits this letter in **SUPPORT** of **House Bill 277 / Senate Bill 249** *Regional Initiative to Limit or Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Transportation Sector - Authorization (Regional Transportation and Climate Protection Act of 2019)*. These bills authorize the Governor to include the State as a full participant in any regional governmental initiative, agreement, or compact that limits or reduces greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. As stated in the Fiscal Note for these bills, "Maryland has already agreed to participate in TCI; thus, any impact resulting from participating in that initiative is likely to occur even in the absence of this bill." CEHPAC's support of these bills emphasizes the impact of greenhouse gases on children's health.

CEHPAC believes it is prudent to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector as climate change impacts both public health and the environment. As stated by National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS): "Children are different from adults in how they interact with their environment and how their health may be affected by these interactions. Children's body systems are still developing through the second decade of life. Because they breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food per unit of body weight, children experience greater proportionate exposure to environmental pollutants than do adults. Because of these and other factors, children are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Federal agencies engaging in climate change preparation, mitigation, adaptation and response need to understand how children may be exposed and how they may be affected by the human health threats posed by climate change."

CEHPAC understands that Maryland's "*Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act*" was originally enacted in 2009 (Chapters 171 and 172), made permanent and expanded in 2016 (Chapter 11). It was enacted in light of Maryland's particular vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Under the Act, the State must develop plans, adopt regulations, and implement programs to reduce GHG emissions by 25% from 2006 levels by 2020, and must further reduce GHG emissions by 40% from 2006 levels by 2030. The 2030 requirement terminates December 31, 2023. We also understand that the "*Transportation and Climate Initiative*" (TCI) of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States is a regional collaboration that seeks to improve transportation, develop the clean energy economy, and reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector. There are 13 participating jurisdictions: Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia (refer to bill's Fiscal Note).

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As defined in statute (Md. Code Ann., Health-General §§ 13-1501 thru 1506), CEHPAC seeks to ensure that the rules, regulations, and standards adequately protect the health of children from environmental hazards. CEHPAC's goal is to enable children in Maryland to grow up in a safe and healthy environment. Our duties include:

- ✓ provide input to the General Assembly on legislation that may impact environmental hazards that affect the health of children;
- ✓ recommend uniform guidelines for State agencies to follow to help reduce and eliminate children's exposure to environmental hazards; and
- ✓ educate others regarding the environmental hazards that impact children's health, the means to avoid those hazards and provide any other relevant information that will assist in protecting children health.

In establishing CEHPAC, the Maryland General Assembly clearly identified children's environmental health as a priority for the State. HB 277/SB 249 addresses many of our concerns regarding the impact to children and their environment from exposure to greenhouse gases, which can and do affect children's health and their environment. CEHPAC has increasingly seen the need to advocate for basic protections for children from hazardous chemicals, specifically those that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in humans, impact water and food, and which are known to be toxic. HB 277/SB 249 is a means of ensuring that children's exposure to the downstream impacts of greenhouse gases can be reduced in Maryland.

CEHPAC urges the legislature to adopt policies to ensure Maryland is a full participant in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or any other initiative that reduces greenhouse gases, because greenhouse gases drive climate change, which directly affects children in Maryland through a variety of health impacts. CEHPAC looks forward to working with the General Assembly on this and other issues and thanks you for your leadership on this issue. The opinions of the Council expressed in this letter do not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or any other State agency.

Sincerely,



Megan Weil Latshaw, PhD MHS

On Behalf of the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council