



Environment Committee

To: Montgomery County Council
Testimony on: Green Bank-Funding-Fuel Energy Tax Revenue
(Green Buildings Now Act) Bill No. 44-21
Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Person
Submitting: Diana Younts, co-facilitator
Position: Favorable With Amendments
Hearing Date: December 7, 2021

Dear Council President Hucker and Council Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support (with amendments) of bill 44-21, the Green Buildings Now Act. The Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee and the undersigned organizations and individuals are supporters of and advocates for the County's ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals. Many of our members took part in the climate change technical workgroups convened by County Executive Elrich; hosted the 2019 Climate Emergency Townhall; and at the state level, we have fought for passage of Community Choice Energy, Organics Recycling, Climate Solutions Now, and other legislation that furthers the goals of Montgomery County's Climate Action Plan. We support the proposed legislation to provide a funding stream to the Green Bank by annually dedicating 10 percent of the fuel energy tax revenue to the Green Bank.

The Green Bank, which is currently undercapitalized, is critical to the success of Montgomery County's Climate Action Plan and for the success of the County's proposed Building Energy Performance Standards Legislation because it will leverage and attract private investment in meeting the County's goals as well as position the County to receive funds through the Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator Program that is part of the federal Build Back Better Act. It would also allow the Green Bank to expand programs, such as the technical assistance programs to building owners that are important for teaching building owners how to decarbonize their buildings. Finally, it will help all of the County, not just those portions in the Pepco service area, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Recommended Updates to the Green Bank Charter:

However, there are critical amendments needed for the Green Bank bill for it to fully help the county to equitably meet its goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035. We therefore suggest the following updates to the Green Bank's charter:

- 1) **No funding for fossil fuels.** If Montgomery County is to reach its greenhouse gas reduction goals, it is critical that funding does not go towards any fossil fuel based energy systems. The Charter of the Green Bank must be amended to explicitly exclude funding for any fossil fuel based projects.
- 2) **Prioritize low income households and communities.** A specified percentage of the funds should be dedicated to low income households and communities. In order to have a just transition to clean energy, it is critical that low income households and communities be prioritized in the transition so that they do not carry the financial burden of supporting the gas infrastructure as those assets are abandoned in the transition to renewable energy.
- 3) **Contract Preferences and Prevailing Wages.** Include Provisions that incentivize private entities to give contract preferences to women and minority-owned businesses and to pay prevailing wages.

A useful model to follow in adopting amendments one and two is the energy efficiency grant program that the City of Takoma Park has instituted. In that grant program, no grant money can be used for fossil fuel sources of energy; all residents of Takoma Park can take advantage of the grants, but the amount and percentage of the project costs is tiered by household income; and for electricity, the homeowners must commit to purchase 100% green energy for 24 months. We note also that the DCSEU (The D.C. Green Bank) also provides no funding for market rate gas fired equipment.

For these reasons we urge you to enact bill 44-21 with the proposed strengthening amendments.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned Organizations and Individuals:

Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry
Sugarloaf Citizens Association
Karen Metchis
Dorcas Robinson
Kathryn Gargurevich