



Maryland Chamber of Commerce

Legislative Position

SB 278
No Position
Education,
Health &
Environmental
Affairs
Committee
02/10/09

SB 278

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2009

Brief Summary of Bill:

SB 278 This bill would require the State to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 25% from 2006 levels by 2020. It would require the State to develop and adopt a specified plan, adopt specified regulations, and implement specified programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Maryland Chamber's Position:

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce represents over 850 companies from broad and diverse industries throughout the state of Maryland. Greenhouse Gas Reductions legislation is a major issue for many of our members, particularly those in the transportation, utilities, manufacturing, retail and land use industries. The Maryland Chamber acknowledges that the SB 278 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act of 2009, is an improvement from similar legislation introduced in the past few years, and it is not harmful to the manufacturing industry, which this bill would exempt from contributing to the required 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2006 levels by 2020. However, due to the broad range of industries that the Chamber represents, and the varying positions among its members regarding the Greenhouse Reduction Act of 2009, the Maryland Chamber will not take an official position on this bill. However, the Chamber would like to identify four serious concerns expressed by a number of Maryland Chamber members impacted by the legislation.

It continues to be the Maryland Chamber's view that greenhouse gas regulation is best accomplished at the federal or international level. Many members of the Chamber are also on record as requesting that the bill contain an express federal preemption clause. The Chamber reserves the right to argue in 2016 for the adoption of a standard no more stringent than whatever the federal government has adopted or for any other position on State policy. It is crucial that the opportunity for a reexamination of State policy in 2016, now contained in SB 278, be preserved.

Second, the Chamber recognizes that the bill is a delicate compromise between many different parties. While the Chamber will not take a position to oppose the bill as it is filed, it may oppose the legislation if it is amended to make it even more onerous to the interests that the Chamber represents.

Third, the Chamber is concerned with the process by which the bill was developed. Not all businesses were involved in the negotiations and others were only brought in during

the later stages of the talks. The Chamber believes that when a proposal has consequences as far reaching as this bill, all potentially impacted parties should have a seat at the table from the onset of discussions. We urge the Administration to make sure that all views – including dissenting views – are represented as further plans are developed with stakeholders.

Finally, the decision not to oppose this measure should not be read as agreement with the recommendations of the Climate Change Commission. Many Chamber members vehemently disagree with some or most of those recommendations, and the Chamber may oppose the implementation of specific proposals that, in the view of Chamber members, lack merit or will have harmful consequences on the business climate. The Maryland Chamber recognizes that the Commission's recommendations do not rely on this bill for authority; however, on behalf of its members, the Chamber urges the Maryland Department of the Environment, as well as the General Assembly to consider the most thoughtful and cost effective approaches to this issue that will not have an adverse effect on Maryland's economy, businesses, and jobs.

If questions please contact Allyson Black, ablack@mdchamber.org