



Maryland's Participation U.S. Climate Alliance

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Cover Photo: Governor Wes Moore's Executive Order 01.01.2025.17 signing which orders to advance environmental justice for communities burdened by pollution at Living Classrooms Marina school in Harbor Point Baltimore on July 17, 2025

Introduction

Maryland has been a member of the U.S. Climate Alliance (Alliance) since 2018 and recognizes the organization as an important partner in its climate action initiatives. State-level climate action is benefiting our nation, and Alliance members are growing our clean energy economies and creating new jobs, while reducing air pollution, improving public health, and building more resilient communities. Alliance members remain committed to supporting the responsibilities outlined in the international Paris Agreement and continue to pursue aggressive climate action to make progress toward its goals.

As a national leader on climate change, Maryland leads by example with its clean air standards and greenhouse gas (GHG) goals. Maryland has found the Alliance's coordination helpful and encouraging as it advances multi-state actions and regional partnerships. Maryland's Alliance engagement is led by Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain, Chief Sustainability Officer Meghan Conklin, Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Assistant Secretary for Climate Policy and International Affairs, Dr. Rachel Lamb, and supporting MDE staff. This report provides an overview of Maryland's engagement and leadership within the Alliance.

The U.S. Climate Alliance Progress in 2025

Each year, the Alliance publishes an annual report outlining collective progress. The 2024 annual report shows that Alliance states achieved an impressive 19% reduction in collective net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between 2005 and 2022, continuing the coalition's sustained trend of declining emissions over a 16-year period. However, reflecting broader national patterns, Alliance members experienced a slight increase in collective GHG emissions in 2022 compared to 2021 as the U.S. economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

Presently, the Alliance is on track to achieve its short-term goal of a 26% reduction in collective emissions by 2025 from 2005 levels.² Achieving its ambitious goals of 50-52% reductions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050 will depend on the alignment of key priorities. These include continued investments in clean energy manufacturing, advanced building standards, grid modernization, and nature- and community-based climate solutions. Following the 2024 election, Alliance co-chairs Kathy Hochul (NY) and Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM) reaffirmed the coalition's steadfast commitment to climate progress, declaring, "No matter the obstacles, our commitment will not waver, and our progress will not be stopped."³

Maryland's National & Global Leadership

Throughout 2025, the U.S. Climate Alliance has been a valuable partner to Maryland, fostering

¹ [No Turning Back: United States Climate Alliance 2024 Annual Report](#)

² [No Turning Back: United States Climate Alliance 2024 Annual Report](#)

³ [U.S. Climate Alliance Co-Chairs, Govs. Hochul and Lujan Grisham, Issue Statements on Presidential Election](#)

collaboration among member states. Through the Alliance, Maryland benchmarks best practices with other states and provides national leadership on issues such as environmental justice to advance equity-centered climate solutions.

Centering Equity and Environmental Justice

Alongside other Alliance members, Maryland is centering equity, environmental justice, and a just economic transition in our efforts to achieve state climate goals and create high-quality jobs. On July 17, 2025, Governor Moore signed the Valuing Opportunity, Inclusion, and Community Equity (VOICE) executive order⁴ establishing a more unified approach in promoting environmental justice in Maryland. The order aims to foster a whole-of-government approach to advance meaningful engagement with communities that have been historically disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution.



VOICE establishes several key requirements for state agencies, such as: mandates the identification and implementation of mechanisms to increase resources and opportunities for historically underrepresented farmers by reducing barriers such as land access and financing; reinforces the roles of state agencies in advancing environmental justice, ranging from urban agriculture programs at the Maryland Department of Agriculture to community health initiatives led by the Department of Health; requires each agency to designate an environmental justice officer and publish a biennial environmental justice strategic plan online, complete with metrics tailored to the agency's authority, mission, and programs; and creates the Interagency Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Council to coordinate efforts, support local governments, and maximize funding opportunities in coordination with the [Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities](#).

The executive order critically requires state agencies to utilize the Maryland Department of the Environment's [MDEnviroScreen](#) mapping tool to engage impacted communities and develop customized solutions for environmental injustice. This tool provides detailed demographic information through interactive maps and tracks disparities related to environmental hazards, exposures, risks, and health outcomes, generating a score that combines pollution levels with population vulnerability. Together with Maryland's new Climate Vulnerability Assessment

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[https://governor.maryland.gov/Lists/ExecutiveOrders/Attachments/89/EO%2001.01.2025.17%20Valuing%20Opportunity.%20Inclusion.%20and%20Community%20EAnnouncementsquity%20\(VOICE\)_Accessible.pdf](https://governor.maryland.gov/Lists/ExecutiveOrders/Attachments/89/EO%2001.01.2025.17%20Valuing%20Opportunity.%20Inclusion.%20and%20Community%20EAnnouncementsquity%20(VOICE)_Accessible.pdf)

Tool—which evaluates localized climate risks such as flooding, extreme heat, and storm impacts—agencies now have a unified, science-based foundation to identify frontline communities, prioritize investments, and design interventions that deliver equitable climate resilience.

Shaping U.S. Climate Action at Home and Abroad

At both the COP30 Local Leaders Forum and Climate Week in New York City, Secretary Serena McIlwain represented Maryland as an active member of the U.S. Climate Alliance, helping advance a national coalition agenda focused on accelerating clean energy deployment, reducing climate pollution, and expanding community benefits. At COP30, the Alliance announced that more than 100 U.S. governors, mayors, and local leaders, including Maryland, would join a unified delegation to elevate subnational leadership on the global stage—an effort Maryland is uniquely positioned to shape through its commitments to clean energy, zero-emissions buildings, environmental justice, and methane reduction⁵. At Climate Week NYC, the Alliance convened governors and Secretaries to highlight major progress toward its collective climate pollution reduction targets and to launch new multistate actions aimed at expanding renewable energy and resilience⁶. Governor Moore’s VOICE executive order was featured at this event. Secretary McIlwain’s participation demonstrated Maryland’s leadership in these national efforts and ensured the state’s priorities—economic opportunity, environmental justice, and rapid emissions reductions—are embedded in the Alliance’s strategy and future policy pathways.

Maryland’s Engagement with Member States

Working Groups

From the Governor’s Office to agencies across state government — including MDE, the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) — Maryland coordinates closely to represent the state across the Alliance’s diverse work groups and to leverage the shared expertise, commitment, and ingenuity of Alliance members.

These working groups span every major emissions sector in Maryland’s economy, as well as cross-cutting issues such as equity, environmental justice, resilience, and state partnership. Maryland’s agency representatives contribute lessons learned from developing and implementing the State’s climate policies while gaining insights from other leading states.

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https://usclimatealliance.org/press-releases/alliance-all-in-climate-mayors-cop30-local-leaders-forum-delegation-oct-2025/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

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https://usclimatealliance.org/press-releases/governors-pressing-forward-sep-2025/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

This ongoing knowledge exchange reflects Maryland's whole-of-government approach to tackling complex climate challenges. MDE's Climate Change Program provides the administrative and logistical backbone for this work, helping to drive interagency alignment, interstate collaboration, and access to funding or technical assistance.

Affordable Clean Cars Coalition

In 2025, the Alliance launched the Affordable Clean Cars Coalition (ACCC), and Maryland was among the first 11 member states to join (with Hawai'i and Wisconsin later joining in September, bringing the total to 13). The Coalition is designed to sustain America's transition to cleaner, more affordable vehicles; support U.S. automotive manufacturers and workers; preserve states' longstanding clean air authority; and provide states with technical resources to cut vehicle pollution and lower consumer barriers to owning, charging, and maintaining clean cars.

Earlier in the year, Governor Moore established the state's own Advanced Clean Cars II and Advanced Clean Trucks Working Group to help the state navigate an evolving clean transportation landscape and gather meaningful stakeholder input. Meeting monthly, the group develops recommendations to reduce transportation emissions, accelerate EV adoption and charging infrastructure, and advance Maryland's climate and environmental priorities. Aligned with the USCA's ACCC, this working group strengthens Maryland's vision, strategy, and coordinated action to address transportation-sector emissions.

This new multi-state effort underscores governors' commitment to consumer choice as well as regulatory certainty and stability for the U.S. automotive sector—especially important amid recent destabilizing federal actions.

Industrial Heat Electrification Initiative

The Industrial Heat Electrification Initiative (IHEI)—jointly convened by the United States Climate Alliance (USCA) and the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM)—is another new cohort designed to help states collaborate on regulatory and policy solutions for industrial heat emissions. The IHEI focuses on transitioning large industrial, institutional, and commercial boilers that provide low-temperature heat to zero-emission technologies such as industrial heat pumps and thermal storage. Notably, at least 30% of the industrial sector's heating needs fall within a low-temperature range suitable for electrification, presenting a significant opportunity to decarbonize Maryland's industrial sector.⁷

Climate Ready Workforce Initiative

To meet Maryland's climate goals, it is essential that efforts to expand renewable energy, advance efficiency and electrification, and strengthen resilience to extreme weather also generate new economic and workforce opportunities for Marylanders. Maryland continues to

⁷ <https://epixc.org/impact-of-industrial-sectors/initiatives> that expand renewable energy, drive efficiency and electrification, and increase resilience to extreme weather, flooding and more must create/

participate in the Governor's Climate Ready Workforce Initiative, launched by the U.S. Climate Alliance in 2024 to grow pathways into climate and clean energy careers, strengthen workforce diversity, and collectively train 1 million new registered apprentices by 2035 across Alliance states and territories.

Through this initiative, Maryland state agencies collaborate with one another and with counterparts across the Alliance to focus on three critical workforce development areas:

- **Clean Energy, Fuels, and Technologies** — including careers in the design, construction, and maintenance of a clean, affordable, and resilient power system; the manufacturing and deployment of zero-emission vehicles and technologies; and the development and distribution of low-carbon fuels.
- **Clean Buildings and Industry** — including careers in the engineering, design, construction, retrofitting, maintenance, and operation of buildings and industrial processes that are clean, energy-efficient, healthy, and resilient.
- **Resilient Communities and Lands** — including careers that support safe, livable, and climate-resilient communities; preparedness for and response to impacts such as extreme heat, wildfires, storms, flooding, and drought; and the deployment of natural climate solutions and climate-smart land and water stewardship.

In addition to these sector-specific areas, the Initiative convenes leaders to explore innovative approaches to cross-cutting issues such as pre-apprenticeship programs, financing strategies, and other tools that can expand access to family-sustaining careers in the clean energy and climate resilience workforce.

Expanding Maryland's Capacity

Access to external technical resources through the Alliance Secretariat has been critical in helping Maryland advance its climate goals and build additional capacity within state agencies. Through specialized technical assistance, the Alliance has supported MDE in developing policies to reduce GHG emissions from buildings, strengthen just transition and retraining efforts, advance buy-clean strategies, expand the Climate Corps program, and accelerate the transition to 100% clean energy by 2035. This continued access to outside expertise and best-practice sharing helps sustain Maryland's momentum as the State advances its climate ambition, implements the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, and delivers health and economic benefits to all Marylanders.