



From Promise To Progress:

John King's Plan to Make Maryland a Leader in Fighting Climate Change

For too long, politicians have promised progress on the challenges of climate change. It's more clear than ever that those promises have been hollow. From rising temperatures, to increased severe weather events and flooding across Maryland, the threat of climate change grows more pressing everyday.

As Governor, John won't just make promises to tackle the challenges of climate change — he will campaign and govern on meeting these goals. John has made it clear throughout his campaign that if we want to actually change things in Annapolis then we must campaign and win a mandate to take action on the most pressing issues facing Marylanders. From protecting and preserving the Chesapeake Bay, to ending the long standing inequities in environmental justice, to meeting the challenges of climate change head on, John is deeply committed to ensuring a whole of government approach to protect our environment and fight climate change.

John's plan for a future in Maryland that mitigates the effects of climate change, creates good green jobs while shifting to renewable energy, reverses centuries long systemic injustice and protects the Bay is based on real achievable goals, with a clear roadmap to how we achieve each objective. John's plan will invest in the long term future of our state by ensuring a carbon neutral future and the creation of a new green economy that lifts up everyone, especially the Black and brown families that are consistently left out of Maryland's economic transformations.

Achieving Net-Zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2035

Between 2005-2017, Maryland [led the country](#) in reducing energy-related CO₂ emission all while the economy grew by nearly 18%. John will build on Maryland's success and make our state a national leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In order to achieve the ambitious goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2035 Maryland will have to hit a benchmark of 60% reduction by 2030. Doing this will create massive opportunities for new good green jobs while requiring innovation and ambitious changes to our economy — particularly electricity, transportation, and buildings and homes.

Electricity still accounts for nearly 30% of our emissions. To build on our success and support the transition to **clean electricity**, John will:

- **Commit to achieve a carbon-free electricity sector in Maryland by 2030.** Currently, some electricity in Maryland still comes from fossil fuels, like coal and natural gas. John will replace this with new, clean technologies like off-shore wind, solar, and geothermal and work with regional partners over the coming years to bring our emissions to zero from our electricity sector. Building on partnerships like those in [Howard County](#), we can work with community leaders, business, homeowners, farmers, and more to deploy renewable energy across the state to best meet the needs of communities. We can provide incentives, financing, and educational opportunities to increase demand for community and residential solar. We will also continue to focus on storage to ensure reliable, affordable, and clean energy for all Marylanders.
- **Ensure Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard only includes clean renewable energy.** For too long, trash incinerators have been polluting Maryland communities while receiving subsidies from Maryland citizens. John will ensure the Renewable Portfolio Standard only includes subsidies for clean energy, including solar and off-shore wind, ensuring cleaner air for all Marylanders.

Transportation is currently Maryland's biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for about 40% of the state's emissions. To reduce our emissions and support the transition to **healthy and clean transportation**, John will:

- **Increase investments in accessible public transit for all Marylanders in communities across the state.** John will support investments to increase access to public transit and ensure our transit systems utilize clean efficient technology to provide Marylanders with safe and healthy options for commuting. He will reactivate the plan for the Baltimore Red Line; complete the Purple Line; and work with the Biden Administration to expand public transit, including light rail like the proposed Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project and expanded, efficient, and electric bus service.
- **Commit to achieve 100% clean transportation for public vehicles, including school buses, by 2030 by replacing the fleet with electric vehicles.** John will ensure that Maryland is leading by example in the transition to clean transportation by ensuring public vehicles are zero-emission electric vehicles.
- **Commit to transitioning 60% of all Maryland cars and trucks to zero-emission vehicles by 2030.** Working with Maryland's Zero Emission Electric Vehicle Council and

capitalizing on federal support, John will accelerate the transition to electric vehicles across the state by informing Marylanders about financial benefits and incentives available and building out charging capacity. He will also ensure as a state and with regional partners that all new cars and trucks sold in Maryland and the region are zero-emission vehicles. This transition will enable all communities to capitalize on the health, environmental, and economic benefits of zero emission vehicles.

- **Build 10,000 fast charging electric vehicle stations in the state.** Maryland only has 3,000 public EV charging options currently, not nearly enough to sustain the coming boom in EV sales. Leveraging federal and state support, John will build thousands more charging options over the coming years to ensure that everyone across the state has a chance to recharge their car when needed and enable newer, less expensive EVs to be sold, particularly for those who live in apartments or other places that are harder to charge.
- **Decarbonize and build resilience for the port of Baltimore by 2030.** Given its size and importance, the port of Baltimore can be a leading port in decarbonization, resilience, and innovation. John will support transitioning the port machinery to clean and resilient systems. We can also work to incentivize innovation to support the fuels of the future for ships and for the machinery needed to bring goods in and out of the port. This will help to both eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and to clean the air for the most vulnerable among us — particularly predominantly Black children growing up near the port who have been breathing the polluted air and have disproportionate rates of asthma.

In Maryland, fossil fuel use in buildings and homes account for about 18% of our emissions. To support the transition to **clean buildings and homes** and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, John will:

- **Commit to at least 3% per year efficiency gains with the EmPOWER Program.** In meeting this standard, John will support the EmPOWER program in considering energy efficiency, along with greenhouse gas emission reductions, consumer support, and targeted support for under-served communities, including through the home and building incentives below.
- **Commit to achieve 100% clean energy use in all Maryland public buildings by 2030 and support public building electrification,** including all Maryland public K-12 schools, community colleges, HBCUs, and University of Maryland campuses by 2030. John will leverage local, state and federal incentives to accelerate renewable energy adoption and energy efficiency in all public buildings. He will also ensure all system replacements utilize clean efficient technology, such as electric heat pumps, to promote building electrification.
- **Support residential homes and commercial buildings in transitioning to clean technology with consultation and financial support.** John will replace existing subsidies for fossil fuel heating and cooling systems with grants and incentives to support electrification. By creating in-home consultation support, we can help Marylanders understand the benefits of transitioning from fossil fuel to clean technology and connect them to local, state, and federal financing opportunities, grants, rebates, and incentives to purchase or install heat pumps, geothermal heating and cooling systems, electric or induction stovetops, residential solar, energy efficiency improvements, and more based on the needs for the particular home or building. John will prioritize the in-home

consultation support and grant funding to under-resourced communities to help ensure a just transition to clean and efficient homes and buildings, and leverage partnerships with national service corps members, community-based organizations, and local business to provide the consultations.

- **Ensure new construction advances a clean and sustainable future.** John will ensure building codes promote building electrification and renewable energy by requiring all new buildings ensure electrification and utilize renewable energy and solar where feasible. Additionally, John will support incentives for new construction designed to be electric net-zero energy buildings. John will advance and build awareness of state and federal incentives to ensure the transition does not increase upfront cost to consumers.
 - **Phase in battery-powered home appliances, like lawnmowers.** Gas powered home equipment is outdated, often inefficient for consumers, and easy to phase out as we move towards a net-zero emission economy.
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Providing Good Green Jobs in the New Economy

The climate crisis presents Maryland with a unique opportunity to reimagine our economy and build a stronger, more sustainable, and inclusive future. John knows that to bring this promise to fruition we must take a holistic approach. We must find ways to address climate change across government agencies and lead by example by divesting the state's pension fund from fossil fuels. Constructing a green economy will create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs, and build wealth for Marylanders in every corner of our state.

John knows that this new Maryland economy must recognize the dignity of work from all its people and break down the structural barriers that have for far too long held back so many Black and brown entrepreneurs. But, it is not enough to just transition the current workforce, we must invest in education and workforce development to ensure Maryland's youth are equipped to understand climate change, advance bold climate solutions, and succeed in the clean economy; and to ensure good clean economy jobs are accessible to Marylanders of color, low-income Marylanders, and others who have been historically underrepresented in good jobs.

John will **support economic dignity** and a just transition by:

- **Ensuring communities of color benefit from the high-wage, high skill jobs** created by the transition to the clean economy and that businesses owned by people of color are centered in the transition.
- **Supporting union jobs and apprenticeships** to ensure family sustaining wages and health and retirement benefits for Marylanders as we transition to a clean economy through off-shore wind, solar, and infrastructure investments.

To ensure Maryland's education system is **developing a clean economy workforce and** contributing to Maryland's sustainable future, John will:

- **Increase funding for STEM, climate change, environmental sustainability, and career and technical programs in K-12 schools**, including those in low-income or high-need communities, community colleges, HBCUs, and the other UMD institutions.

- **Work with Maryland educators, students, and families** to develop and integrate cross-curricular climate change standards for students across grade levels.
- **Center historically underserved students and institutions** in opportunities for high-quality career and technical education programming for the high-skill and high-wage green careers of the future.

John will **appoint a State Climate Advisor within the Governor’s Executive Council** to identify and address cross-cutting opportunities to address climate change.

- The state climate advisor will work across agencies with the public, the General assembly, the Maryland Commission on Climate Change, the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities, Maryland businesses, and other local and community leaders to ensure Maryland advances ambitious climate policies to improve our environment, create economic opportunity, and advance climate justice.

John will **divest the state pension fund from fossil fuels.**

- Our commitment to reducing our reliance on fossil fuels must extend across all our policies. In addition to the environmental benefits, fossil fuel divestment makes sense economically as our worldwide economy makes the transition away from fossil fuels. By divesting from fossil fuels, as a state, we will demonstrate a strong commitment to a sustainable future.

Building Adaptable and Resilient Communities

Maryland communities are already beginning to feel the ravages of climate change. Marylanders are seeing the cost of inaction first hand across the state. In the last 5 years, Ellicott City has been devastated with two 1000-year floods that have taken lives and livelihoods. In Dorchester County, rising sea levels are threatening jobs, historical sites, and housing. Droughts have devastated Maryland farmers and left them with tough decisions about their crops. And, according to a 2016 report by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, increased heat waves in Baltimore City have led to higher levels of asthma.

The time to act is now. We must build adaptable and resilient communities. While we know that inland flooding, heat waves, and droughts will continue, we can make key investments in infrastructure, stormwater management, and green spaces to prepare Maryland for climate impacts.

To equip communities to face the climate challenges ahead and build **healthy and resilient communities**, John will:

- **Invest in infrastructure resilience and planning.** John will use federal and state infrastructure investments to ensure our roads, bridges, public transportation and coastal areas, particularly in under-resourced communities most impacted by climate change, are better prepared for and can adapt to a warming planet.
- **Invest in stormwater management infrastructure to reduce community flooding, heat, and run-off.** Leveraging federal investments and enabling partnerships, John will support comprehensive approaches to better address stormwater management. Strategies

to redesign community waterfronts to better absorb water, like plans in Annapolis, and shift heat-trapping asphalt schoolyards to sustainable green community schoolyards can help reduce community heat and flooding and increase access to green space for communities.

- **Invest in resilience hubs in particular in under-resourced communities.** By investing in strategies like installing solar and battery storage at local schools, we can ensure that people have a safe place to access power and support in case of climate related emergencies.
 - **Support healthy communities by expanding access to sustainable, walkable, transit-friendly communities and locally grown-food.** Ensuring all Marylanders can access healthy green spaces, community gardens and farmers markets, walking and bike trails, and public transit can improve our air quality and our community health and wellbeing.
 - **Support and properly implement the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's efforts to plant 5 million trees** on the Eastern Shore and provide funds to expand those efforts statewide.
 - **Support waste management strategies, including composting, to reduce emissions and pollution.** Landfills and incinerators contribute to climate change and localized pollution. Implementing the Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion Bill can help the state keep food and organic waste out of landfills reducing emissions and pollution. The compost produced can be used to support healthy soils, which also has the added benefit of sequestering carbon. John will continue to work to divert waste from Maryland's landfills and reduce pollution.
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Protecting And Restoring The Bay

A healthier Bay would be an economic boon to Maryland and the other five watershed states. Over the last three decades, Maryland and Virginia have suffered more than \$4 billion in cumulative annual losses because of the decline of industries related to oyster harvesting. Further, the decline of crabs in the Bay between 1998 and 2006 has meant a cumulative loss of about \$640 million to Maryland and Virginia. According to estimates from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Bay currently provides benefits of at least \$107.2 billion annually to the six-state region, which would skyrocket by over \$22 billion per year if the Foundation's Bay health goals were reached, with \$4.5 billion of that benefit going to Maryland.

With a watershed covering 64,000 square miles, we must protect the Bay and improve its health while protecting our vulnerable coastal communities from the effects of climate change. To preserve and protect the Bay, **John will:**

- **Uphold Maryland's commitment to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement with our neighbors, which has fallen in priority under the Hogan administration.** Currently, the Bay and surrounding watershed are overseen through a cooperative effort by governments of DC, the six watershed states, and the EPA. There is also the Chesapeake Bay Commission, an interstate compact and legislative commission representing lawmakers in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, an agreed-upon directive describing desired environmental goals

and the processes necessary to reach them between Maryland and the other two states, was updated in 2014, but the policies and goals have yet to be fully renewed while Hogan has been in office except minor amendments added in 2020. Maryland deserves a governor that honors the state's environmental commitments to its people and its neighbors.

- **Reduce runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus.** Maryland has improved its runoff problem in recent years but still has a long way to go. An increase in urban, suburban and agricultural land use has raised the amount of nutrients and sediment entering streams and rivers while at the same time lowering the water supply. This leads to things like algal blooms that create low oxygen “dead zones” and sediment build-up that can suffocate oysters and destroy habitat. Our state did not meet mandatory agricultural nitrogen reductions in 2019 and we're far behind meeting reductions for 2025. The most significant contributor to nitrogen and phosphorus pollution is agricultural fertilizer runoff, but stormwater, wastewater, and air pollution contribute as well.
- **Stop the historic level of overfishing and oppose relaxation of current oyster fishery and sanctuary rules.** Oysters and shad populations have yet to rebound from historic overfishing. The native oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay has declined due to a combination of over-harvesting, disease and habitat loss. Over-harvesting has removed large volumes of oysters from the Bay, destroying healthy reefs by scraping them away with dredges, which now limits oyster beds to flat, thin layers of dead shell and other live oysters on the bottom of the bay, offering less surface area for reef-dwelling organisms to live. Restoration efforts in the Bay must include managing oyster harvest, establishing oyster sanctuaries and strategies to overcome disease. Fishery managers recently proposed relaxing oyster harvesting restrictions and the DNR under Hogan has been much more open to reducing restrictions on harvesting, so it's important to have a Governor in office that will oppose rolling back restrictions.
- **Regulate farm operations around manure and chemical fertilizers to improve water quality and reduce farm pollutants, which will eliminate “dead zones” and allow the recovery of the Bay's native wildlife, like its oyster population.** The poultry industry in Maryland has long impacted the Chesapeake Bay due to nutrient and sediment runoff from poultry waste both onsite at poultry farms and in fertilizer applications on crops at other farms. Agriculture is the biggest source of runoff on the Eastern Shore, contributing the bulk of the nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment that leads to dead zones, smothering of oysters, depletion of bay grasses and even flesh-eating diseases, 2019 saw 900 million pounds of raw manure produced by Delmarva's 609 million chickens, most of which was disposed on already phosphorous filled farmland, leading to run-off into public waters.
- **Introduce regulations to reduce poultry waste that pollutes the Bay, including finally passing the Poultry Litter Management Act so corporate poultry producers must clean up after themselves.** Delmarva poultry operations, while an important source of jobs and economic driver on the Eastern Shore, produce unregulated ammonia emissions that end up polluting waterways as fans blow ammonia waste out of chicken houses. Despite this, the Maryland Department of Environment does not require the inexpensive, common sense methods to mitigate ammonia emissions like planting trees, shrubs and tall grasses near escape fans. The Poultry Litter Management Act proposed in 2016 would have required corporate poultry such as Perdue, Tyson, & Mountaire to pick up excess manure instead of leaving the burden on individual farmers and taxpayers, but

didn't make it very far. As governor, I'll work with the legislature as well as direct our state agencies to create more regulations cutting down on poultry waste and finally pass the Poultry Litter Management Act.

- **Restore the limits on poultry pollution introduced by Governor O'Malley and halted under Hogan.** Hogan campaigned against rules reducing pollution associated with chicken manure and halted limits introduced by Governor O'Malley while replacing them with his own regulations. Under his administration, MDE has purposefully stalled and drafted improper regulations for legislation passed by the General Assembly causing years of delay in implementing stronger standards. As governor, my administration will work with the legislature and support their proposals around poultry regulation, not slow walk protections that ensure the health of our invaluable natural assets like the Bay.
 - **Support Maryland's farmers in advancing sustainable agriculture practices.** Maryland farmers feel the impacts of climate change firsthand as drought and other extreme weather impact crops. At the same time, Maryland farms are currently demonstrating how regenerative agriculture can benefit the environment and the farm. By integrating the perspectives of farmers in state planning, promoting local farms, and accelerating healthy soil use and natural carbon sequestration, we can support Maryland farmers and lead the country in sustainable and regenerative agriculture.
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Environmental Justice

From increased exposure to air pollution and environmental toxins to greater susceptibility to flooding and heat, communities of color and under-resourced urban communities suffer more from the impacts of climate change. John will prioritize advancing climate justice across all policies to address climate change and make investments in the communities impacted most.

John believes everyone deserves to live in a healthy and clean environment, no matter their income or zip code. Unfortunately, today there are wide gaps between neighborhoods in the quality of air, water, and soil Marylanders work and play in every day.

One of the most glaring examples of environmental injustice in our state is in Baltimore City, where most of the city's trash is burned in a majority Black neighborhood. Between Baltimore's lower-income, mostly Black neighborhoods and its wealthier, whiter ones there is a 20-year-gap in life expectancy. Across the state, this disparity continues as fossil fuel and industrial plants are often located in communities of color.

These disparities aren't just seen in Baltimore, but across the state. Black Marylanders are more likely to suffer from asthma, and over two times as likely to die from asthma than white Marylanders. They also see a disproportionate risk of cancer from exposure to toxins in the air.

As Governor, John will:

- Crack down on polluters, especially serial offenders.
- Seriously implement the largely ignored recommendations from the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities, and build on 2021 reform legislation.

- Ensure government agencies take a proactive approach to environmental justice when drafting rules and policies, instead of a reactive one that waits until problems arise to make changes.
 - Make sure stakeholders from front line and fence line communities historically affected by pollution and environmental injustice have a role in decision-making.
 - Develop Maryland's Clean Energy sector and tighten our environmental regulations to protect our air and water across the state.
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