



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 503 – Environment - Office on
Climate Change - Establishment**
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 3, 2021

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

HB 503 establishes an Office on Climate Change in the Office of the Governor to facilitate the implementation of the Commission on Climate Change's recommendations. The Bill requires the Office to ensure that each State agency addresses ways the agency can mitigate the causes of climate change and certain impacts of climate change. The Bill also requires the Office to initiate and oversee certain research and investigations. Furthermore, it requires the Office to work with local governments on the resources needed for the implementation of the plans.

The JCRC has a long history of favoring policies which protect the environment and reverse climate change. Our agency is committed to addressing the need to protect our environment—public lands, water and air and, in particular, the critical, indeed, existential threats climate change poses to the Earth's environment. The climate is changing in alarming and rapid ways and the causes stem from human behaviors, many of which are within our power to change. We firmly believe that the Jewish community—in fact, all communities—must act unequivocally to protect nature and the environment from further harm and to ameliorate, to the extent possible, the effects of harms we can no longer prevent. For these reasons, we ask the committee to give a favorable report on HB 503.