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Introduced by: Councilmember Curran

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning
Request for State Action - Override Veto of the Clean Energy Jobs Act
For the purpose of calling on the General Assembly to override the Governor's veto of the Clean Energy Jobs Act (S.B. 921/ H.B. 1106) to combat climate change, create and sustain jobs where they're needed most, and start to unlock the full talent of our state's clean energy entrepreneurs.

Recitals

The Clean Energy Jobs Act (S.B. 921/ H.B. 1106) will raise Maryland's renewable portfolio standard (RPS) to 25% by 2020 and create a working group to identify funding opportunities for clean energy job training and to remove barriers to entry for minority- and women-owned clean energy businesses in the clean energy industry.

Baltimore City's Climate Action Plan calls on Maryland to increase the State's RPS.

Maryland should enact policies that encourage the clean energy industry to grow, while seeking to increase the diversity of business owners and employees. By implementing the Clean Energy Jobs Act, Maryland can combat climate change, create and sustain jobs where they're needed most, and start to unlock the full talent of our state's clean energy entrepreneurs.

Businesses need certainty. Vetoing the Clean Energy Jobs Act has created an uncertain business climate for the clean energy industry in Maryland. This uncertainty can harm Maryland's and Baltimore City's economy through foregone investments of private capital that would otherwise have helped clean energy companies expand operations and hire new workers.

Fossil fuel combustion is a public health crisis. Over 5 million Marylanders live in counties that received a D or F air quality grade from the American Lung Association,

and the state notoriously has some of the worst ground-level ozone pollution in the eastern U.S. These health burdens harm low-income people and people of color disproportionately. More clean energy will significantly improve Baltimore's air quality leading to reduced instances of asthma and premature deaths.

A 25% clean electricity standard will create incentives for roughly 1,300 megawatts of new clean energy in our region and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 2.7 million metric tons per year. That's the carbon equivalent of taking 563,000 passenger vehicles off the road every year, which will also deliver improved public health outcomes, cleaner air, and cleaner water.

By increasing our clean power to 25% by 2020, Maryland will bring more good-paying clean energy jobs to the state. By increasing the carve-out for solar, the Clean Energy Jobs Act will add to the state's solar workforce, which currently employs 4,300 Marylanders. The "installation" sector, where the average wage is nearly $23/hour, represents nearly 80% of all solar employment in Maryland. Increased incentives for land-based wind power would create another 4,600 jobs in our region.

The Maryland Department of the Environment's October 2015 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan Update found that Maryland's RPS is a multi-billion dollar net economic benefit to the state. Vetoing the Clean Energy Jobs Act harms economic growth by preventing expansion of this successful policy.

Maryland's "Strategic Energy Investment Fund" (SEIF), is a special, non-lapsing fund established by lawmakers for low-income rate assistance and clean energy and energy efficiency investments. The primary source of funding for SEIF comes from carbon allowance auctions through Maryland's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - a multi-state effort to reduce carbon emissions from power plants.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act will advance Maryland's efforts to build a diverse clean energy workforce. The legislation creates a working group process among government agencies and clean energy stakeholders to examine the best funding opportunities, through new and existing programs, to invest in job training and to remove barriers to

entry for minority- and women-owned clean energy businesses. The bill also makes small minority- and women-owned businesses in Maryland eligible to receive dedicated funding for market growth through SEIF.

The working group established through the Clean Energy Jobs Act will seek to advance employment opportunities and job readiness from economically distressed areas with high areas of unemployment. The working group will also seek to advance opportunities to provide job training for workers who are veterans of the armed forces and those who face barriers to entry into the labor force such as homelessness, prior criminal records, or unemployment with no high school education.

The Maryland Veterans Caucus Legislative Committee favorably recommends strong support of The Clean Energy Jobs Act, and the full caucus voted to support this bill. There are economic benefits to employing veterans in the state. The State Veterans Caucus mission is to study, develop, and promote legislation designed to improve the quality of life for veterans in the State of Maryland in the areas of employment, education, economic, training and health, and to assist the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in achieving its mission and goals, on behalf of veterans in the State. There are approximately 471,200 veterans living in Maryland.

Local governments all across Maryland are taking advantage of the opportunity to engage in clean energy. The Clean Energy Jobs Act will create more opportunities for cities and counties in this state to experience the benefits of clean energy, one of the most important being the savings for local governments. When local governments save money with clean energy, funds that would otherwise be used to cover utility costs can be reinvested in infrastructure and other community support services, or even be used to provide local tax relief.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council calls on the General Assembly to override the Governor's veto of the Clean Energy Jobs Act (S.B. 921/ H.B. 1106) to combat climate change, create and sustain jobs where they're needed most, and start to unlock the full talent of our state's clean energy entrepreneurs.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly,

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the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House Speaker, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.