Clean Energy

Renew Maryland

What is Maryland doing to move our state to cleaner, more renewable energy?

In 2009, the Maryland General Assembly tasked the state with creating a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act (GGRA) Plan in order to reduce the state's production of greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by the year 2020. A key portion of the plan focuses on the state's energy use and how to make it cleaner, cost less and be more efficient. There are three key programs that are working to achieve this goal:

Maryland Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard: A top program in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan, this portion of the plan requires that 20 percent of Maryland's electricity come from clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar by 2022. Meeting this goal means that more of the electricity we use in Maryland is coming from clean energy, including rooftop solar. Maryland is currently on track to meet this goal.

EmPOWER Maryland: Under this initiative enacted in 2008, the state's goal is to reduce its energy consumption per capita by 15 percent by 2015. Using less energy through efficiency and conservation will save you money on your energy bills, and it is the easiest, fastest and most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Everyone can do it! Heating and cooling account for more than half of your home energy costs, followed by water heating. Purchasing efficient heating and cooling systems, using low-flow showerheads, sealing leaky windows and doors, and adding insulation all add up![1]

Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI): This is a cooperative effort by nine Northeast and mid-Atlantic states to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from electricity-generating power plants. Recently, Maryland and the other RGGI states agreed to lower their emissions cap, which will help greatly to achieve the 2020 emissions reduction goal. This means that electricity-generating power plants will need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions coming from their plants and pay for the emissions that exceed the limit.

Read more about each of these programs at: http://climatechange.maryland.gov/actions/

Maryland also is a national leader in promoting plug-in electric vehicles (EVs). The Maryland Clean Cars Program and federal fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks help reduce tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants.

The transportation sector contributes one-third of Maryland's greenhouse gases, second only to the power sector. However, EVs charged on Maryland's electricity grid – and most other grids in the U.S. – have a significantly smaller greenhouse gas footprint than comparable vehicles powered by gasoline or diesel. In Baltimore the EV footprint is 37 percent of a comparable conventional car. EVs will continue to get cleaner as the grid gets cleaner through Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the federal Clean Power Plan and other programs.

Maryland offers a tax incentive for purchasing and leasing cars, a rebate for purchasing and installing charging equipment and a large and growing network of public chargers around the state.

[1] U.S. Dept. of Energy. (2011). Residential sector: Buildings energy data book. Washington, DC: Building Technologies Program, Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, U.S. Dept. of Energy. Available at http://buildingsdatabook.eren.doe.gov/ChapterIntro2.aspx

Renew Maryland

What Can I Do to Help?

- Have an energy audit done on your home to see what actions you can take that will save you money on your utility bill. Maryland partners with the state's utilities to conduct fast energy check-ups, discounted home energy audits and provide other rebates for efficiency measures. Go to http://energy.maryland.gov/residential/Pages/incentives/CleanEnergyGrants.aspx to find out more.
- Use less energy by making upgrades to your home. This can include simple measures like sealing ductwork, repairing ceiling leaks or upgrading to ENERGY STAR home appliances. There are tax credits and utility incentives available for making these upgrades – click here for more information.
- You can earn tax credits by installing solar panels on your home. Solar installation companies allow you to lease this technology making it cost the same or less than your monthly utility bill. For more information on installing solar panels on your property, click here for information.
- Composting your food and yard waste reduces the amount of garbage we send to landfills. Also, pursue simple water-saving actions, such as not letting the water run while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Use the EPA's Carbon Footprint Calculator to estimate your household's impact relating to home energy, transportation and waste.
- Take advantage of state and federal incentives to purchase an electric vehicle. Together with a federal income tax credit of up to $7,500 for purchasing EVs, Marylanders may be eligible for as much as $10,500 in tax credits to offset the EV's purchase price. View this one-page summary of state and federal incentives to learn more and find application forms.

Resources

Climate Change Maryland: http://climatechange.maryland.gov/
EmPower Maryland: http://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/Facts/empower.aspx
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/home.html
Maryland Clean Cars Program: http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Air/MobileSources/CleanCars/Pages/index.aspx
Maryland Energy Administration: http://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx
Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative: http://www.rggi.org/
Sustainable Maryland Certified: http://sustainablemaryland.com/
MD Sun: http://mdsun.org/
Maryland Clean Energy Center: http://mdcleanenergy.org/