



February 28, 2021

Ms. Adriana Hochberg
Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and Climate Change Coordinator
Montgomery County Government
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Ms. Hochberg:

Bethesda Green is a non-profit organization based in Bethesda, MD. Our mission is to address environmental challenges locally by creating a sustainable, green community, built collaboratively through citizen engagement, environmental education, government partnership and innovative business development.

We are included as a signatory to the Climate Action Plan Coalition comments and fully endorse the comprehensive and detailed analysis and recommendations contained therein. Separately, we would like to offer an additional, over-arching commentary on the Draft Montgomery County Climate Action Plan as you move to formulate final recommendations and plans.

A core component of Bethesda Green's work focused on green business development as part of our Be Green Business program. This work is in consistent alignment with the County's engagement with local green businesses. We support both the Innovation Lab and the Best for DMV Campaign. The Innovation Lab works to cultivate innovative "eco-entrepreneurs" and incubate green business development to ensure compatibility between economic development and environmental protection. Separately, we advise existing local businesses through B-Corps certification on best practices for sound governance, support for workers, and sustainability – both organizationally and as part of the region-wide Best for DMV Campaign.

Our Best for DMV Campaign, funded in part by a County Community Grant, provides participating companies with tools and workshop series sessions to benchmark, express and improve their triple-bottom-line impact (people, profit, planet). Through this program, our region is encouraging the triple-bottom-line business philosophy, so that one day, companies thrive not only to be the best, but also to attract the best for workers, and improve communities and the environment. **Supporting the Best for DMV Campaign was a recommendation from the Public Engagement Workgroup and was omitted from the CAP draft.** We strongly believe that the final Montgomery County Climate Action Plan should have a greater focus on green business development, utilizing private sector partnerships to address climate change generally, and endorsing enhancement of the Best for DMV Campaign specifically.

For example, the draft Climate Action plan briefly touches on green business in the Actions for Business Owners section of the plan (page 211-212):

Actions for Business Owners - *Become a Certified Green Business: The Green Business Certification Program helps businesses to green their day-to-day operations through the*



*provision of tools, incentives, inspirational ideas, collaboration, and leadership opportunities.
Visit: <http://www.mcgreenbiz.org/>.*

Bethesda Green is a Montgomery County Green Certified Business and has supported the Green Business program. We respectfully request that participation in the Best for DMV Campaign be resubmitted as an action for business. The **Best for DMV** Campaign aims to dramatically expand the number of District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) businesses that incorporate impact into their business models. We believe that the long-term change needed to address many of our regional challenges cannot be accomplished without broad-scale engagement of the private sector. We need more businesses to recognize the breadth of their impact and the power they have as change agents. This is especially important since tackling climate change in Montgomery County cannot be limited strictly to actions in the County but will be enhanced with a region-wide approach that incorporates positive actions in neighboring jurisdictions.

The County's greenhouse gas emissions reduction depends on the business community benchmarking environmental impacts. There are only eight B Corp Certified businesses in Montgomery County. These businesses are committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions through B Corp Certification. Certified B Corporations meet the highest verified standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability. The Best for DMV Campaign is a gateway program to assist businesses to start benchmarking their impacts and assists companies in becoming B Corp Certified. Through our programming, businesses can begin to benchmark their greenhouse gas emissions and set targets for reductions.

The County's Climate Action plan is focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but this cannot be accomplished without the private section assessing their current emissions and setting target reductions. Our program helps all for profit businesses benchmark their impacts and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. **Therefore, we highly recommend the Best for DMV Campaign be included in the Actions for Business Owners section.**

Bethesda Green is prepared to offer detailed guidance and work with you and your team to develop additional language to implement a more robust set of recommendations in the Climate Action Plan to address private sector investment in reduction of greenhouse gasses and overall actions to address climate change. This effort will be particularly timely as the County simultaneously plans to emerge from economic constraints due to covid-19 and explore ways to further county-wide business development in combination while addressing climate change.

Thank you for considering our joint coalition comments and this additional request to enhance the focus on private sector involvement in meeting the County's ambitious and important climate action goals.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam M. Roberts".

Adam M. Roberts
Executive Director