

3/12/2020

BILL: HB 1543

TITLE:Climate Crisis and Education Act

POSITION:SUPPORT

HEARING DATE:3/12/2020

COMMITTEE: Economic Matters

SPONSOR: Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo

My name is Meg, and I'm a junior at the University of Maryland. Like many students here at this university, I was born and raised here in Maryland. I was lucky enough to be lovingly brought up in a comfortable middle-class household as the oldest of five kids, with parents who emphasized the importance of education. They also impressed on me something that started me on the journey to where I am right now - strong women stand up for what they believe in.

When my hometown of Ellicott City flooded, it was called a once-in-a-thousand-years event. And then it happened again. We have still not recovered. Walking downtown, you will see small businesses boarded up, buildings abandoned, constant construction. Our once-charming city is in disrepair. Signs in parking lots warn that vehicles are susceptible to flood damage. Already the new norm of extreme flooding has cost my community millions that we just don't have.

I've always cared about climate change. But like a lot of people, it always seemed just beyond my control. I have asthma, but I love to run. I completed my first marathon last year. Still, there are days when it's simply too hot, or the air is simply too polluted for me to breathe, so I'm forced to stay inside.

Each year, I begin to feel more and more that we live in the deep south. I'm a resident assistant at UMD, and last year my buildings infrastructure could not keep up with the hot and humid climate. We had to evacuate students because our air conditioning could not compete and the hall was overwhelmed by mold growth.

People often say that climate change will affect future generations, that it's a problem we're "going to solve." I am living proof that its effects have already begun to burden us. HB 1543 would make it a problem we are actively solving.

Individual actions like recycling, biking, composting can only do so much. We look to our state's leaders in Annapolis to urgently and responsibly address this crisis. For this reason and more, I urge a favorable report on HB1543.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cc: Members of the Economic Matters Committee