



Montgomery County Young Democrats Testimony in Support of HB 1543-Climate Crisis and Education Act

Chair Davis, Vice Chair Dumais, members of the Committee,

Thank you for receiving our testimony. My name is Michael DeLong and I am the President of the Montgomery County Young Democrats, a group of young Democrats ages 14-34 who are dedicated to making Montgomery County and Maryland better places to live, with freedom, opportunity, and justice for all. Our testimony is in support of HB 1543 (the Climate Crisis and Education Act), sponsored by Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, and the Senate version SB 912, sponsored by Senator Ben Kramer. This bill will help to mitigate climate change and fund education on the crisis as well as other educational priorities, and it deserves your support.

Climate change is one of the biggest crises facing our state, and in order to mitigate its effects, Maryland needs to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 70% in 2030 and 100% by 2040. These pollutants are harming the future of our children, our economy, and our infrastructure. At the top of those affected by climate change and the accompanying poor air quality are historically disenfranchised communities: those living in poverty stricken areas and communities of color.

HB 1543 will establish a Climate Crisis Initiative in the Department of the Environment and a Climate Crisis Council that will develop a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will also fine companies emitting fossil fuels, charging them for the pollution they are causing. The bill forbids the fossil fuel companies from passing these fees on to consumers, and will hold them accountable for the damage they are causing to the environment and climate.

Accountability continues to be an ongoing challenge for companies who are emitting greenhouse gases, with too many of them avoiding payment for their emissions. HB 1543 will end that and ensure companies have a strong incentive to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and move toward cleaner energy. It will further result in substantial funds for the state government; fossil fuel companies will become more accountable for their actions and put their money towards the improvement of Maryland.

Finally, the Climate Crisis and Education Act will fund excellent priorities. It will invest in clean energy infrastructure and provide money for the Kirwan Commission's recommendations to fully fund education. The fee will result in \$350 million per year to fund those recommendations, which will benefit Maryland's children, families, and overall welfare.

We Montgomery County Young Democrats urge you to vote for HB 1543 and favorably report it out of committee, and to urge your colleagues to do the same.

Please contact us at mocoyoungdems@gmail.com or michaeldelong94@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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