

Good afternoon Chairwoman McIntosh and delegates of the Appropriations committee. My name is Reese Barrett, and I'm a very proud Marylander. I was born in Annapolis, and have spent my entire life on the Severn river, crabbing and water skiing and rafting up on the Fourth of July with my mom, my dad, my brother, my sister, and my grandparents. My family is built on a foundation of sharing time outdoors, and I know a lot of you can say the same.

Right now, I'm a full-time sophomore at the University of Maryland, College Park. I graduated as valedictorian from Severna Park High School in Anne Arundel County, and I'm majoring in chemical engineering with a minor in sustainability studies. I'm a straight-A student with a full academic scholarship, and I do research on campus because I'm hoping to someday earn a PhD and work as a professor. I'm also in a few other student organizations and try my hardest to make time for my friends and family. All of this is in the midst of a pandemic that has made learning and growing up and being a kid in college even tougher than usual.

Since I've gotten to campus, I've also dedicated a ridiculous amount of time to climate activism, and now that I'm the campaign coordinator for the MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition, those hours have only increased. I'm in that position, and I'm also here today, because I don't feel as if I have a choice. The climate crisis threatens everything I hold dear, including my river and all of the memories I've made on the water with the people I love the most.

People today are going to talk a lot about the cost of implementing this bill. It's true that taking action on climate is not an easy or cheap thing to do. However, I'd like to ask you all this—what is the cost of inaction? Economists would say that it's about \$50 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which (by the way) is far more expensive than what this bill will cost. But, beyond the numbers? What about the cost of severe flooding that has devastated families and businesses in Annapolis and Ellicott City? What about heat islands and health inequities in Baltimore? What about rising sea levels and my cousins on the Eastern Shore? And what about the threat that climate change poses to our outdoor spaces that have brought our families together and given our lives meaning?

As adults, and especially as people in government, you have a responsibility and a moral obligation to leave the world a better place than you found it. I want you to take a hard look at the cost of inaction, and I want you to tell me that this bill costs too much. It is past time to act, but you can start today, here, by taking real action that leaves a legacy telling your children and grandchildren, people like me, that you love them enough to protect the planet they will inherit.