



Committee: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB803– *Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act*

Organization: Greenbelt Climate Action Network

Person Submitting: Lore Rosenthal, Program Coordinator

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 25, 2021

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB803– *Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act*

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh and Members of the Committee,

The Greenbelt Climate Action Network (GCAN) supports HB803, the Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act of 2021.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to the future of our planet and the lives of our youth. Youth are leaders in the climate movement for a reason, as the climate they stand to inherit is being damaged irreparably. We must act swiftly and decisively to protect and restore our climate, so that those that will inherit it can enjoy climate stability. We have a lot at stake here in Maryland when it comes to climate change, and the consequences of inaction will fall onto the shoulders of our youth.

Institutions of higher education have played a huge role in Maryland and around the world as beacons of research and societal progress. Public universities have a responsibility to protect, educate, and support citizens of the state and to lead their institution to support these principles. However, these public institutions have massive carbon footprints due to their high-tech research facilities, energy needs, and commuter emissions. Youth are utilizing their agency to remind public research institutions of their guiding principles. This legislation will ensure that universities will lead the way in carbon neutrality, secure co-benefits for the state, and address climate change while addressing climate justice.

This bill makes Maryland Public Universities leaders of sustainability and climate justice by:

- Reducing scope one and scope two carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and scope three induced emissions by 2035
- Ensuring carbon offsets are of the highest standard
- Requiring that a portion of carbon offset projects benefit Maryland and/or directly benefit environmental justice communities
- Facilitating the sharing of best practices through establishing offices of sustainability at each institution.

The FUTURE Act will push our state's public institutions of higher education to the forefront of climate action, accountability, and research. The bill encourages the adaptation of low-emission solutions like an all-electric fleet or purchasing renewable energy while still allowing the universities flexibility through offset purchasing. GCAN sees this bill as an important systemic solution which will benefit universities, students, researchers, and residents of the state.

The Greenbelt Climate Action Network supports HB803.

Signed,
Lore Rosenthal, Program Coordinator
Greenbelt Climate Action Network