



February 6, 2024

Economic Matters Committee
State Capitol
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Economic Matters Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Green America in support of **HB 426- Open Captioning Movie Bill**, sponsored by Delegate Harry Bhandari. The Bill would require each movie theater to add onscreen captions on all movies at least two (2) times per week, in an effort to make moviegoing more accessible.

Green America is a national nonprofit organization with 300,000 members and supporters nationwide, thousands of whom live in Maryland and the National Capital region. We work to promote a green economy that works for all people and the planet.

Many of our members would benefit from onscreen captioning of movies. We have members and family members of our members who are deaf, who are hard of hearing, who are neurodivergent, learning to read, learning English, and/or elderly. These are just some of the people who would benefit from onscreen captioning. Many hearing people also appreciate captions so they don't miss dialogue in movies.

Current mandated technologies, including glasses or "cup holder" technologies are often difficult to use and provide a sub-optimal viewing experience for users, since they must attempt to view the movie and captioning through these devices at the same time. They may also be uncomfortable with disclosing their disability to the theater.

Showing onscreen captioned movies twice per week would allow all moviegoers the opportunity to better understand the dialogue of the movie they are watching. Millions of people use onscreen captioning when watching television at home for this reason.

We are therefore supportive of HB 426 and hope that the Bill moves forward as it would allow more people to fully experience and enjoy movies in Maryland – benefiting residents, visitors, and movie theaters.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Larsen".

Todd Larsen, Executive Co-Director