

SJ0002 –Use of Nuclear Weapons-- March 8, 2024; 9AM
Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Position: SUPPORT (FAVORABLE)

Testimony of James P. Wagner, Ph.D.
on behalf of a new group called Plant the Light

My favorable testimony focuses particularly on why this is a Maryland State issue. I enumerate these points below.

- 1) The Federal government is largely not acting, despite the collapse of cornerstone nuclear weapons treaties such as the INF (Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (in 2019), and Russia suspending its participation in the last remaining Treaty, the New START Treaty (about 1 year ago).
- 2) Given that Federal policy makers are not acting, and therefore also given that Marylanders are under an increasing threat from nuclear weapons, we want our State and Local Governments to fulfill their obligation to protect their citizens. We want State and Local Governments to step in and do everything within their powers to protect us from nuclear weapons. This Resolution (SJ 0002) is one thing that our State government can do towards its obligation to protect and serve its citizens.
- 3) In a sphere of activity where Federal action is lacking or where the activity is ostensibly Federal purview, there is substantial precedent for States taking their own, independent actions. Examples in Maryland include the State minimum wage, our State's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, and our State's wide-ranging environmental legislation, in which facilities (including Federal facilities) must be permitted by Maryland and must follow Maryland Regulations. Nuclear weapons policy has traditionally been left up to the Federal government, but in the absence of Federal action, it is the obligation of State and Local governments to act with all their means on the issue.
- 4) To date, across the U.S., there is wide and growing consensus that State and Local governments have a right to be engaged in the conversation on nuclear weapons. 76 Municipalities and Counties and 7 state legislative bodies have already adopted Resolutions similar to SJ0002. <https://preventnuclearwar.org/whos-on-board/>
- 5) SJ0002 mirrors Federal Resolution, [H. Res. 77](#), and calls for support of it. It represents a collaboration between Maryland and the other jurisdictions across the country and the 43 enlightened members of Congress (those members thus far endorsing H.Res. 77) to reduce the nuclear threat. The Senate and House of Maryland have every right to make this statement and join in this collaboration. Indeed, with the [Doomsday Clock](#) now at 90 seconds to midnight, it is the duty of the Maryland Senate and House to join in this collaboration.

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