

SJ0004—Use of Nuclear Weapons—March 13, 2025; 1:00 PM, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Testimony of James P. Wagner, Ph.D., L.E.H.S. on behalf of our new, interdisciplinary organization, Plant the Light

Our 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 (2019) and Russia suspending its participation in the last remaining Treaty (the New START Treaty) about two year ago, and the looming expiration of this Treaty in less than one year.

2) Given that Federal policy makers are not acting, and given that Marylanders are under an increasing threat from nuclear weapons (see below “Doomsday Clock”), we call on 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 the nuclear weapons threat. This Resolution (SJ0004/HJ0006) is an action that our State government can immediately take 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 RPS renewable portfolio energy 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 Local and State governments, in service to their citizens, to step in and act.

4) In that vein, across the U.S., there is widespread and growing consensus that state and local governments have this right and obligation– to be engaged in the conversation on nuclear weapons. The updated totals are 77 Municipalities and Counties and 8 state legislative bodies which have already adopted Resolutions similar to SJ0004/HJ0006, and the numbers continue to grow. Please see the [national Back from the Brink home page](#) for more.

5) SJ0004 mirrors a Federal Resolution from the 118th Congress, [H. Res. 77](#), and calls for support of the new version of it, soon to be introduced in the current (119th) Congress. It represents a collaboration between Maryland and the other jurisdictions across the country, as well as the 40+ enlightened members of Congress (those who had endorsed 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 89 seconds to midnight, and with nuclear weapons cited as a major factor in its recent advancement toward “midnight,” it is the duty of the Maryland Senate and House to join in this collaboration.

6) [The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons \(TPNW\)](#), cited in both State Resolutions, and a centerpiece of the Federal Resolution, was adopted in the UN in 2017, in overwhelming consensus by 122 countries of the world. **There is global consensus that nuclear weapons must be eliminated. Contact: James P. Wagner with any questions: 240-586-1215, your.james.wagner@gmail.com**

