



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Sarah Elfreth
Maryland Senate
103 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for SB 373, Legislative Initiative to Establish the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund

Dear Senator Elfreth,

On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC), we offer support for your bill (SB 737) to establish the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund mandate for a minimum annual allocation of \$750,000 be included in the Governor's Budget Bill.

Sustainable Maryland has received no core funding for the last four years, the program has been 99% supported through special project grants. Currently, Sustainable Maryland does not have enough resources to issue funds directly to local projects. The development and the maintenance of the core program functions has been under invested. The bill would allow staff to provide on-going training, peer-networking convening, and the ability to focus on comprehensive and technical sustainability projects. It will also allow Sustainable Maryland to issue funds and support direct projects to localities, totaling over 70 Maryland municipalities since 2017.

Supporting initiatives to meet the region's climate goals is a COG policy priority and the bill's passage will directly assist implementation of actions in Maryland communities that protect natural resources, facilitate suitable land use, conserve energy, reduce greenhouses gas emissions, and encourage smart growth.

Please contact Steve Walz, COG's Director of Environmental Programs at (202) 962-3205 or swalz@mwkog.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Sze', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Hon. Daniel Sze
Chair, Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee