



Craig A. Moe
Mayor

CITY OF LAUREL OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, MD 20707-2502
Phone: 301-725-5300 ext. 2124 • Fax: 301-725-6831



February 21, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: MD SB0737/HB1520 Sustainable Maryland Program Fund - Establishment

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

Maryland's municipal communities stand united in support of the MD SB0737/HB 1520 and urge a "YES" vote on the bill to establish **the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund**. Our cities and towns represent a broad-based and diverse cross-section of over 76 communities from across our State that have benefited from the technical assistance, education, and resources provided by the Sustainable Maryland (SM) program. This bill to expand and enhance SM is a critical step in the State's effort to empower local action and realize statewide environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Over the past nine years, SM has supported municipal governments across the State of Maryland by providing jurisdictions like ours with a comprehensive suite of policies, resources, direct support, and incentives designed to help municipalities make progress across a broad range of sustainability goals. In addition, SM has helped communities build a strong network of active citizens committed to building the capacity of local governments and improving local-level sustainability throughout the State. This bill to establish an SM Program Fund will help codify this statewide effort and ensure local governments have the education, technical assistance, and financial resources necessary to improve quality of life.


As registered and certified municipalities of the SM program, we have firsthand experience with the benefits of a dedicated and comprehensive technical assistance program. While other programs may offer specific environmental services, the SM program framework helps provide our elected officials, staff, and local Green Teams the education and technical assistance needed to develop our own capacity to manage local sustainability issues and take advantage of resources already available.

Not only does SM enable us to more easily navigate other state and local programs, but it also helps us to organize our residents to take action. Through the SM program we have received training and information necessary to communicate the

importance of sustainability to our residents, established a plan for taking action, and increased our ability to pursue funding to improve our community. The SM program has become a primary driver for building community capacity to engage in sustainability projects. By supporting this bill, the State will help to elevate and amplify these efforts. The SM Program Fund will help to replicate and scale Green Teams to other local jurisdictions and provide much needed funding to pursue new and innovative community-based projects.

By supporting the SM Program Fund, you honor the State's commitment to support Maryland communities. The current legislation advocates for local governments and helps provide much needed resources for improving the civic infrastructure upon which our communities depend. The State should take this opportunity to expand and support this high-performing program in order to increase technical assistance, coordinate local efforts, and encourage more communities to take action.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Moe
Mayor

cc: Maryland Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members
The Honorable James C. Rosapepe, Maryland State Senator, District 21
The Honorable Benjamin S. Barnes, Maryland Delegate, District 21
The Honorable Mary A. Lehman, Maryland Delegate, District 21
The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk, Maryland Delegate, District 21
Laurel City Council President Keith R. Sydnor
Laurel City Councilmembers
William F. Goddard, III, City Administrator
Lou Ann Crook, Deputy City Administrator
Christian Pulley, Director of Economic and Community Development
Sara Green, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor