



**Maryland House Bill 896: Environment: Statewide Green Business Certification
Program Establishment
Environment & Transportation Committee
February 26, 2020**

SUPPORT

Written Testimony

My name is Fran Teplitz and I serve as executive co-director of Green America and as director of Green America's Green Business Network. Since 1982, Green America has been using the power of consumers, businesses, and investors to build an economy grounded in social justice and environmental sustainability. For us, a "green economy" is one that respects and supports the needs of both people and of our environmental heritage.

I submit this testimony in support of Maryland House Bill 896 to create a state-wide Green Business Certification Program. Consumer demand has been growing nationally and internationally over the decades for sustainable products and services supplied by businesses that truly take into account their impacts on people and the planet. According to new research published in October 2019 through University College London, nearly 9.5 million Americans are employed in the green economy and generate \$1.3 trillion per year. In order for consumers, businesses, and investors to know whether a company is indeed part of the "green economy," by having responsible and sustainable practices, third-party verification is required.

The Green Business Network is very pleased to partner with the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program. Our Gold Certification is among the certifications accepted by the County for verifying green business claims. Our certification is designed especially for small-to-mid-sized businesses that are mission-driven. We tailor our membership costs according to the number of employees in the company, or, for companies in the financial sector, to their assets under management. This tiered approach makes certification affordable for a wide range of businesses and we offer certification across 40 industry sectors.

We believe that expanding the green business certification program so that it is state-wide will be of great benefit to the Maryland marketplace, to communities, and to the environment. Consumers increasingly demand greater transparency and commitment to environmental and social principles from the companies they patronize. Through their green practices, businesses

build greater customer loyalty, reduce costs, and play a more positive role in the communities in which they operate and through their supply chains.

This is an important opportunity for the State of Maryland to demonstrate leadership by recognizing and acting on the need to promote a business community that is forward thinking, conserves natural resources, reduces waste, and is committed to best practices for a sustainable future.

For the aforementioned reasons, Green America and Green America's Green Business Network support House Bill 896 and respectfully urge a favorable report. Thank you.