

Energy-Conserving Standards: Maryland Sustainable Buildings Act of 2021 (HB 0236)

TESTIMONY OF KEVIN BAKER

I am a student in HCPSS (a sophomore at Marriotts Ridge High School) with an interest in helping the planet I am growing up to live in be both habitable and sustainable.

When I was in fifth grade, I remember reading a story about the American Carrier pigeon and its migrations. I don't remember much of it today, but one thing has stuck with me. I didn't know that the pigeon was hunted to extinction until the end, where I read the author's note that provided historical context. Ten-year-old me was crushed by this knowledge; knowing that Americans willfully killed every single bird was not a happy thought, so naturally hearing about this bill today made me want to prevent the possible extinction of other migratory birds by our buildings.

I understand that others testifying can provide the facts needed to prove scientifically *why* this bill should be passed, but I am writing to provide another view of the problem: the view of the people who are going to experience the aftereffects of causing the unnecessary deaths of all these birds. This view demands that this bill be passed as quickly as possible. Here's why:

- The time for action came and went a long time ago. The health of the planet and all of its organisms has been in decline ever since the industrial revolution, so it's time that we picked up the slack and get on the road to recovery.
- In school you always hear the idealism of "be a leader", or "set an example". Maryland could certainly be a leader by passing this bill.
- The Trump Administration has weakened the EPA. Hopefully we will make environmental progress with President Biden, but we need to make up for the disastrous effects this has caused (ex. Reinterpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, selling federal land to oil companies, leaving the Paris Climate Agreement)
- I have spent lots of time in Patapsco State Park in the last couple years, and love its scenery. I want other people to be able to experience its beauty for years to come. Some of this has already happened; many more people are using the trails as a way to get exercise while social distancing. They have come to appreciate Maryland's natural beauty and will most likely support this bill.
- Nobody likes finding a dead bird outside his or her window; it happened to me this winter and was a saddening sight.
- This bill is part of an easy solution to a serious problem. It demands to be passed as quickly as possible.

People my age care greatly about the environment, but teenage cynicism makes it hard to see a way out of the mess we have made. I think young people will support this bill, as any action is infinitely better than none. I dearly hope that the state of Maryland will pass this bill, not only to help the birds and reduce energy consumption, but also to give the younger generation some hope about the future state of their planet.