



March 9, 2021

SB 835 - Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Position: Favorable

Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

Environment Maryland and Maryland PIRG are excited to support SB 835 requiring public universities to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. Action on our climate cannot wait, and this is an important step in transitioning our state away from fossil fuels.

This bill will help give our children and grandchildren a safer, healthier future by pushing our state universities to go fossil fuel free, promoting carbon-free transportation, reducing power plant pollution and more.

The climate crisis looms large, and we need all hands on deck to fight it. Our public universities can play an important role in this fight. SB 835 will ensure that our universities are part of the climate solution. This will also show our students that our state and our public universities stand with them, and are committed to protecting the planet and their futures.

This bill requires complete carbon neutrality by 2035, with an intermediate goal requiring carbon neutrality for purchased electricity and direct emissions in 2025. These are reasonable and achievable benchmarks for universities to hit, and in line with the reductions scientists say are necessary. With the additional requirement of a dedicated position to ensure climate and sustainability goals are being prioritized and met, universities will be well-equipped to achieve these goals. As our campuses and communities shift to carbon neutrality we should invest in energy efficiency and ensure our energy choices are clean, safe, and tread lightly on the planet.

It is important to note that this bill is entirely student-led. Students asked for their universities to make this commitment and have worked tirelessly to organize around these goals on campuses across the state. Environment Maryland and Maryland PIRG proudly stand with Maryland's public university students, and urge you to vote favorably on SB 835.

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