

Good afternoon Chairman Pinsky and senators of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs committee.

My name is Reese Barrett, and I'm a very proud Marylander. I was born in Annapolis, and have spent my entire life on the Severn river, crabbing and water skiing and rafting up on the Fourth of July with my siblings and parents. My family is built on a foundation of sharing time outdoors, and I know a lot of you can say the same.

Currently, I'm a sophomore at the University of Maryland, College Park. I graduated as valedictorian from Severna Park High School in Anne Arundel County, and I'm now majoring in chemical engineering with a minor in sustainability studies. I'm a straight-A student with a full academic scholarship, and I do research on campus because I'm hoping to someday earn a PhD and work as a professor.

I've also dedicated hours and hours to climate activism because I don't feel as if I have a choice. The climate crisis threatens everything I hold dear, including my river and all of the memories I've made on the water with the people I love the most.

It's true that taking action on climate is not an easy or cheap thing to do. But what is the cost of inaction? Economists say that it's about \$50 per ton of CO₂ emissions. Our universities are in the perfect position to be leaders on this issue for a small fraction of that price. Schools represent both their own researchers who are at the forefront of climate science, and also their students, who are spending tens of thousands of dollars on tuition. We are investing in our universities, and they, in return, need to invest in our futures.

Universities understand the science, but there is no clear plan to implement strategies based on their values. UMD is in the process of renewing their contract for their on-campus natural gas plant. There has been no indication that the new 30 year agreement will include meaningful emissions reductions. If schools are not willing to make tangible plans and instead hide behind language of "life-cycle analysis," we need a state-level commitment.

As adults, and especially as people in government, you have a responsibility and a moral obligation to leave the world a better place than you found it. I want you to take a hard look at the cost of inaction, and I want you to tell me that this bill costs too much. It is past time to act, but you can start today, here, by taking real action that leaves a legacy telling your children and grandchildren, people like me, that you love them enough to protect the planet they will inherit. Thank you.