

BILL: HB630
TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education -- School Energy Use -- Policy and Study
POSITION: SUPPORT
HEARING DATE: 3/25
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
SPONSOR: Delegate Solomon

Hello, my name is Oliver Song, and I am a sophomore at a local high school in Howard County. I am here today in support of the School Energy Use policy and study.

America's 17,450 K-12 school districts spend more than \$6 billion on energy every year - more than is spent on computers and textbooks combined. Sometimes up to 30 percent of a district's total energy is used inefficiently and unnecessarily. This excessive use of energy is wasteful and inefficient, and horrible for the environment.

Thus, it is crucial we begin to transition away from this usage. It has never been more imperative than now to conserve our nation's energy resources. This bill would require that schools address the purchasing, conservation, and efficiency of energy for the school, allowing flexibility in how this will happen and offering a solution to this problem.

Evidence is also growing that energy-efficient schools can boost learning environments that lead to improved student performance. Studies have shown that daylighting, which is using daylight for light, may have a positive effect on student attitudes and performance. One study by Innovative Design showed that students attending daylit schools for two or more years scored 14 percent better on tests than students in non-daylit schools. While correlation does not equal causation, most schools can make the best choice- which is to conserve energy by using natural means.

The compilation of data will also allow each school district to compare energy usage and see if their initiatives are working. It will also allow them to set goals- to slowly move towards the desired goal. Isn't that just a great situation for the environment and the students of the nation?

With so much carbon being spewed into the atmosphere, we must take action as the individuals who use this energy and curb our energy consumption. Yes, saving energy at home is great, but the real wasters are the schools that expend so much energy every single day. There is a middle school near my High school that is completely carbon neutral. It is powered by solar panels, and is the first net zero energy school in Maryland. The new and renovated school houses 49% more students and uses 50% less energy. If all Maryland schools could gradually move toward this net zero system, then the energy usage would decrease significantly- giving both students and staff a better school environment. In addition, many schools have outdated lighting and heating systems, which also wastes energy. With this bill, school districts can begin addressing these issues.

For these reasons and more, I, Oliver Song, urge a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB630

Respectfully submitted,

Oliver Song