



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB835– *Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act*

Dear Chairman Pinksy and Members of the Committee,

University of Maryland's Residence Hall Association (RHA) supports SB835, the Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act of 2021.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to the future of our planet and the lives of our youth. Youth are leaders in the climate movement for a reason, as the climate they stand to inherit is being damaged irreparably. We must act swiftly and decisively to protect and restore our climate, so that those that will inherit it can enjoy climate stability. We have a lot at stake here in Maryland when it comes to climate change, and the consequences of inaction will fall onto the shoulders of our youth.

Institutions of higher education have played a huge role in Maryland and around the world as beacons of research and societal progress. Public universities have a responsibility to protect, educate, and support citizens of the state and to lead their institution to support these principles. However, these public institutions have massive carbon footprints due to their high-tech research facilities, energy needs, and commuter emissions. Youth are utilizing their agency to remind public research institutions of their guiding principles. This legislation will ensure that universities will lead the way in carbon neutrality, secure co-benefits for the State, and address climate change while addressing climate justice.

This bill makes Maryland Public Universities leaders of sustainability and climate justice by:

- Reducing scope one and scope two carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and scope three induced emissions by 2035
- Ensuring carbon offsets are of the highest standard
- Requiring that a portion of carbon offset projects benefit Maryland and/or directly benefit environmental justice communities
- Facilitating the sharing of best practices through establishing offices of sustainability at each institution.

UMD students hold sustainability near and dear to their hearts. RHA's Senate regularly see resolutions concerning sustainability such as implementing competitions to see which residence halls can use the least energy, requiring our community councils to have at least one sustainability themed event, making strides towards creating a sustainability education segment as part of our schools mandatory student orientation before students arrive on campus, and a recent resolution to officially support SB835. Many of these come out of our active Sustainability Committee of Maryland which we have had since 2011. We are doing what we can to slow climate change on our campus and we hope that our representatives will do what they can to slow climate change in Maryland, including but not limited to passing SB835.

University of Maryland's RHA supports SB835.

Signed,

Melissa Ryan Mader