

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0729– Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying
Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act**

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Hayden Kessinger, and I am writing in support of HB0729. I am a voting resident of district 37B. Importantly, this bill makes Maryland Public Universities leaders in carbon reductions by requiring carbon neutrality by 2035. It will also make Maryland Public Universities leaders in climate justice by establishing an Environmental and Economic Justice Scholarship Fund for in-state students displaced by climate change or from environmental justice communities. Further, it facilitates the sharing of best practices and resources through establishing offices of sustainability at each institution and lays the foundation for a Sustainability General Education Requirement.

As a lifelong Maryland resident and current University of Maryland student, I believe my institution must act on climate change to protect its faculty, staff, and students. It is no longer enough to discuss the importance of the environment and impacts of climate change; the science is clear and needs to be supported by legislation. The effects of climate change are unavoidably apparent in College Park; just this week, we have seen temperatures as high as 70 degrees Fahrenheit only to be dragged down to below freezing two days later. Even mild days are noticeably plagued with human impact that can be felt in one's lungs while on a leisurely jog around campus. Preoccupied by indoor air filters that mitigate the risk of viral infection, we've forgotten about the quality of our air outside the classroom. As I spit and sputter from the hazy campus air, I find comfort in the thought of the FUTURE Act and the beauty that is embedded in its name. In a world increasingly contaminated with cough-inducing smog, the FUTURE Act allows Earth to take a deep, cleansing breath.

I respectfully urge the Appropriations Committee to return a favorable report on HB0729.

Optimistically,
Hayden Kessinger
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