

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0471– Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying  
Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh and delegates of the Appropriations committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear about the FUTURE Act, written by a coalition of college students. My name is Nivi Mariappan, and I am a fourth year student majoring in Biology and Economics at UMBC. Although I now live in Howard County, I was born and, for the most part, raised in New Jersey. When I first moved to Maryland, my family and I were excited about all the new opportunities that we had for outdoor activities. We used the time of change in our lives as an opportunity to hike and bike together. Now, almost eight years later, the cycle paths around the BWI Airport and the trails in Patapsco Valley State Park have become as familiar to me as my backyard.

Recently, however, I have started to notice an unfortunate change. More and more often, sweltering summer days and unexpected weather changes have prevented my family and I from going for a hike or a ride. Over the last few summers, I have found myself wondering, *how much longer until I can't go out like this anymore?* Last year was the first time that I really became afraid of climate change's impact on my future. That June, my family and I went biking in what ended up turning into a day with over 100-degree temperatures. The heat was unexpected, and by the time I stumbled back into my house, I felt horrible. My family and I felt so nauseous and disoriented, we could barely bring ourselves to eat or drink anything. For the rest of the summer, my family and I stopped going out as often, or cut trips short to avoid the swelter. We missed out on seeing new places and spending quality time together because of the intense weather. I realize that now, more than ever, we need to take action. Without climate action, my generation as well as future ones will not be able to have the same meaningful experiences that I have had.

As a college student passionate about environmental issues, I am especially fond of the sustainability office requirements in the bill. Having people at the university-level that students can turn to about environmental concerns is significant. It provides them an avenue to take action on their passion and anxiety over climate change. I am especially interested in this requirement after the experiences that I have had at my university. The Office of Sustainability at UMBC has provided students the opportunity to become leaders in promoting climate action. For example, their Eco-Ambassadors program consists of passionate students who work together to assess and promote sustainability on campus. Similarly, the UMBC Office of Sustainability gave students

the voice and power needed to establish a composting program for people living on campus. They partnered with the Student Government Association and the Resident Student Association to bring this initiative to campus. Just like at UMBC, students at other universities could take action against climate change through the establishment of an Office of Sustainability. The FUTURE Act also requires Offices from different campuses to share ideas, which promotes knowledge-sharing and a greater sense of community.

The climate crisis is already happening, and we need to act now. Throughout the world, people are already experiencing the disastrous effects of climate change. If we do not make changes to promote sustainability, there is no telling what struggle future generations, and even young people now, will face in the coming years. Once again, I would like to thank you for your time. I hope you take seriously the words that I and many other students have for you today and understand how important it is to pass the FUTURE Act.

Sincerely,

Nivi Mariappan