



January 19, 2022

Re: MD HB 100 / SB 14 Sustainable Maryland Program Fund - Establishment (Position: Favorable)

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

The Mount Rainier Green Team wishes to express its support of the **MD HB 100 / SB 14** and urges a favorable report and a “YES” vote on the bill to establish **the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund**. Our Green Team and our community have benefited greatly from the technical assistance, education, and resources provided by the Sustainable Maryland (SM) program. This bill to expand and enhance SM is a critical step in the State’s effort to empower local action and realize statewide environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

The City of Mount Rainier has a long history with the Sustainable Maryland program. Mount Rainier was one of the first four municipalities certified through the program in 2012. The City was also the Sustainability Champion in 2015 and was certified for the fourth time in 2021. Thus we have firsthand experience with this unique framework that helps provide our Green Team, elected officials, and staff with the education and technical assistance we need to develop our own capacity to manage local sustainability issues.

There are so many improvements that the city would not have done if not for the Sustainable Maryland Program, in particular ones that allowed us to do our part to improve the Chesapeake Bay. The City recently installed pet waste stations throughout the community that will reduce harmful pet waste from draining into the Chesapeake Bay, a program that was made more affordable through Sustainable Maryland. The City also was able to work with Sustainable Maryland and their University partners to analyze the City’s carbon footprint, which then led to adoption of a climate resolution to put us on the path to net zero emissions. With more and consistent funding the Sustainable Maryland program could provide these types of resources to a greater swath of Maryland.

The program also allows for knowledge transfer between municipalities. For instance, Mount Rainier learned of the successful edible forest in Edmonston and Hyattsville and now we have two successful edible forests. We learned of these activities and others at Sustainable Maryland hosted forums. Through Sustainable Maryland forums we are sharing our successes with other municipalities too, such as our new native pollinator network program that would benefit from much wider adoption. Permanent funding will allow for more consistent opportunities like

these to allow municipalities to develop collaborative efforts, share ideas, and make Maryland more sustainable.

By supporting this bill, the state will help to elevate and amplify these efforts. The SM Program Fund will help to replicate and scale Green Teams to other local jurisdictions and provide much needed funding to pursue new and innovative community-based projects. The Maryland General Assembly should take this opportunity to expand and support this high-performing program in order to create more and stronger Green Teams across the state of Maryland.

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Sarah Lifsey

Sarah Lifsey
Chair
Mount Rainier Green Team