

My name is Emily McCoy, and I am in writing in support of HB0729. I am a voting resident of district 33.

HB0729 is also known as the FUTURE Act which has a very fitting name. The bill focuses on what college campuses in Maryland can do now to support a more sustainable future. College campuses are essentially small cities of their own and produce a lot of air and water pollution like one as well. The FUTURE Act holds Maryland colleges and universities responsible for their carbon emissions which will benefit not only those on campus, but the surrounding communities as well. High carbon emissions can cause negative health impacts such as drowsiness, headaches, poor concentration, and loss of attention. The poor air quality impacts everyone on campus and the surrounding community. This can negatively impact the health and education of children who go to school near the campus and the university students as well. The university I attend has its own power plant and the emissions have caused me headaches and poor concentration in classes. As a minority seeking a higher education, I do not need another outside factor holding me back. I am constantly getting headaches and it is noticeable that on the campus I get them frequently while at home, away from campus, I do not have headaches. These intense headaches distract me from my education at times which is why I support a bill that puts the stop to the culprit, high carbon emissions.

I believe that my university should act because many other students face the same challenges as I do when it comes to health issues caused by high emissions. Additionally, my university is surrounded by vulnerable communities and communities of color. These communities have been forgotten by the government when it comes to environmental issues. These are the communities that have landfills and power plants placed near them, like the power plant for my university, and must deal with the negative health and environmental impacts. These communities should not need to deal with a university degrading their community especially when universities can afford to switch to sustainable energy sources. The universities need to be held accountable for their actions and the FUTURE Act does just that while also providing a healthier future for everyone in the community.

I am already feeling the effects of climate change. As an environmental science student, I am aware that climate change causes extreme weather events involving temperature, precipitation, and more. Living in an urban setting accentuates these impacts. For the past couple of weeks, the temperature has been fluctuating from icy cold winter weather to beautiful spring, almost summer, weather. This fluctuation of temperature impacts my health. Even though I am young, I have had knee issues for most of my life. These temperature changes hurt my joints and walking 20 or more minutes to classes is painful. On top of headaches, I must also deal with aching joints when I am supposed to focus on my education.

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

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