



Committee: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB729 - Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act

Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition

Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 1, 2022

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

We are pleased to submit our testimony in support of HB729, the Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB729.

The signs of climate change are all around us with more extreme rainfall events and flooding, hotter summers, and rising sea levels along Maryland's 3,100 miles of shoreline. All public agencies and institutions in Maryland must do their part to reduce climate pollution and become more sustainable. This is particularly important for the University System of Maryland, because it emits more carbon than all other state agencies combined. The FUTURE Act ensures that Maryland Public Universities will take responsibility for addressing climate change.

Specifically, the FUTURE Act makes Maryland Public Universities leaders in carbon reductions and climate justice by:

- Requiring carbon neutrality by 2035 (scopes 1 and 2 by 2025)
- Establishing an Environmental and Economic Justice Scholarship Fund for in-state students displaced by climate change or from environmental justice communities
- Facilitating the sharing of best practices and resources through establishing offices of sustainability at each institution
- Conducting a feasibility and implementation study for a sustainability education requirement for each institution.

Today's Maryland Public University students will be tomorrow's leaders and problem-solvers. They need to see institutions of higher education setting an example and leading the way. The FUTURE Act does this. We support HB729 and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.