

Testimony SB383/HB531
Budget and Taxation Committee
Position: Support
February 8, 2022

Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair Senator Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee: I Strongly urge your support of SB383/HB531 the “Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education Grant - Funding and Evaluation – Extension.”

My name is Elizabeth McCook, I am currently a high school science teacher at Urbana High School in Frederick County, Maryland. I have been teaching in Maryland for the past 36 years, 23 of them here at Urbana High School. I am an Environmental Science teacher and have come to know the value of providing students with learning opportunities that are real and relevant to their everyday lives. Environmental Education is a fantastic way for students to see connections between the classroom and their surroundings, our environment. Several years ago, along with much support and guidance, my students started a composting program in our school cafeteria. Support from MAEOE and community organizations have helped this grow into initiatives across the state. We need and appreciate the efforts by MAEOE that helped and continue to help make this possible.

We have since become a Maryland Green School and have started a Green Team at our school to support this project. MAEOE and the Green School Application process provided my students with the framework to improve and lessen our schools’ environmental impacts. It is critical that you continue to support MAEOE and their efforts to strengthen environmental education and resources for schools and teachers. Our stable future depends on students having the knowledge, appreciation and realization that they can make a difference with the choices they make.

The Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators, MAEOE, recognizes the importance of their role as support for formal and informal environmental teachers in Maryland who have the same mission. Across the state, MD Green School Teachers have used the environment as a lens for their instruction. The cultures at these schools have shifted to improving levels of awareness, protection and recognition of the fact that even one student can make a difference and positively impact their surroundings and quality of life in their homes and communities.

Students who are a part of a MD Green School such as ours, are exposed to many practices of sustainability first hand. Being a part of the MD Green School network allows teachers to share ideas and practices that create unique opportunities for our students. Empowerment of student ideas and the implementation of successful change-making projects leads to communities of adults who are interested and willing to make changes too. Supporting MAEOE supports sustainable communities in our future. I believe in the impact of MD Green Schools and I acknowledge and want you to know that this would not be possible without MAEOE and their leadership.

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