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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 383 – Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education Grant –
Funding and Evaluation – Extension**

February 8, 2022

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget & Taxation Committee:

The Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE), works to transform schools and communities by encouraging, engaging and empowering schools and communities to understand, responsibly use and promote the natural world. MAEOE's signature program, Maryland Green Schools is nationally recognized as having significant impact with students and schools. The program provides educational opportunities for preK-12 schools that increase awareness and understanding of environmental interrelationships and promote responsible environmental stewardship practices.

The Maryland Green Schools program allows schools to demonstrate that they incorporate local environmental issue instruction for each grade. Teacher professional learning is required and documented to verify the types of programs being endorsed. Students become involved in and lead sustainable practices.

The Green Schools Act supports professional development, creates resources to help students get access to environmentally focused activities, supports school projects that incorporate environmental best practices and increases environmental educators in the state. In 2019 the legislature passed the Maryland Green Schools Act to expand the Maryland Green Schools program with a goal of having 50% of all Maryland schools as Green Schools by 2025.

The grant was for five fiscal years beginning with FY2021. Unfortunately, many of the programs planned for FY 2021 and 2022 were not able to be implemented due to COVID. Senate Bill 383 will simply extend the grant for two years so the intent of the original bill can be realized.

It is critical that our children have a solid understanding of their role as environmental stewards and this program, with state funding, has the ability to reach a vast number of our pre-K through 12 students and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 383.