

Favorable Testimony -- SB0014

Sustainable Maryland Program Fund - Establishment

Dear Chair Paul Pinsky, Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB0014, which establishes the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund.

The Town of Berwyn Heights has worked with the Environmental Finance Center's Sustainable Maryland (SM) program since before the town was first certified in 2014. We have since been re-certified twice. As a small town, the Sustainable Maryland program has been invaluable in building our capacity to tackle important environmental challenges and create a healthy and sustainable community for our residents.

We've gained great value from the opportunity to network and learn from other municipalities through the program. Berwyn Heights staff members and Green Team members have attended many Sustainable Maryland education and outreach events that have allowed us to learn from, share with, and connect to other municipalities across the state on topics like stormwater issues and creating pollinator corridors. As a result, we've been able to pursue initiatives that we couldn't have accomplished on our own.

SM has also provided support for specific projects in Berwyn Heights. SM allowed us to install 10 pet waste stations and educational materials in our community. This semester we are working with an SM student project assistant to complete a municipal carbon footprint. Through our three rounds of certification, we have undertaken many projects that have improved quality of life and have received support from SM every step of the way.

We would greatly appreciate SM's support in using upcoming federal and state funding opportunities to advance our sustainability goals. We are also working to take an equitable approach to environmental action and would appreciate support from SM in making sure all parts of our community receive the benefits of sustainability efforts.

The SM program achieves significant public environmental benefits in a cost-effective way by connecting communities with resources and with each other to incentivize strong environmental action. I urge you to create the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund to address the significant environmental challenges we face across the state. This funding will enable Sustainable Maryland to continue working with small towns like Berwyn Heights and provide important sustainability training and resources to more Maryland communities across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda M. Dewey', written in a cursive style.

Amanda M. Dewey

Mayor, Town of Berwyn Heights