



Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
Testimony on: SB471 - Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act
Organization: WISE
Submitting: Monica O'Connor
Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 15, 2022

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. WISE is an all-volunteer women-led group of advocates formed in Anne Arundel County, and has over 600 members. WISE urges you to vote favorably on SB471

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 this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.