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**Oakland Mills High School Climate Activism Club**

Testimony in support of FUTURE Act - HB0729 & SB0471

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

15th February 2022

Position: **Favourable**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

The OMHS Climate Activism Club strongly supports the FUTURE Act and wishes to thank Senator Rosapepe for his efforts and sponsorship of this bill. The FUTURE Act is a necessary step in mending the worldwide ramifications of climate change on a state level.

The FUTURE Act will make Maryland's public higher education institutions carbon neutral by 2025 for scopes one and two, and by 2035 for all others. Carbon neutrality will prevent Maryland from being polluted further by removing the amount of Carbon produced by the universities from the environment. The Act will also establish Offices of Sustainability at each university by 2023 to educate students and maintain a clean environmental footprint, and the Environmental and Economic Justice Scholarship Fund to help Maryland's disproportionately affected low-income and minority communities.

According to the EPA's studies on climate change in Maryland, the overabundance of atmospheric carbon will make weather patterns increasingly erratic and dangerous, causing droughts and flooding to increase in frequency and severity. This has already become a problem in places like Ellicott City. Warmer waters will continue to unbalance the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem, disrupting the fishing industry. Rising sea levels will be especially rapid in Maryland. It will destroy wetlands and erode beaches, negatively impacting multiple species and possibly destroying farmland due to saltwater intrusion contaminating soil and freshwater. Coastal towns and islands will be severely impacted; Assateague Island is in danger of disappearing completely. All this equates to destroying the tourism, fishing, and agricultural industries our state depends on. Carbon emissions will cost Maryland billions of dollars it does not have and irrevocably damage the natural beauty and wildlife of our state.

As teenagers, we look forward to the opportunities before us: going to college, building careers, buying our first homes, and maybe even building a family. The decisions you make today will determine our tomorrow. Climate change is already an irreversible reality: action must be taken now. We are testifying for the FUTURE Act because as students, it is our futures that are at risk. By making universities carbon neutral and establishing a fund to help those who are vulnerable, Maryland will be taking a critical step in preserving the future we hope to have.

We desperately ask for your favourable report of this bill.

Sincerely,

Margaret Kato, *President*

Keela Daniels, *Senior Club Member*

Bibliography:

“What Climate Change Means for America”. United States Environmental Protection Agency, August 2016. 19January2017snapshot.epa.gov. Accessed 12 February 2022.