

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Testimony on: SB 0014 Sustainable Maryland Program Fund-Establishment

Organization: Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Submitting: Nanci Wilkinson, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 9, 2022

The Environmental Justice Ministry of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church supports SB 0014 Sustainable Maryland Program Fund – Establishment which will provide non-lapsing funds to expand and enhance Sustainable Maryland’s promotion and support of communities in Maryland in the effort to realize environmental, economic, and social sustainability; authorize the Fund to be used for training and education, outreach and engagement, and develop and expand the Sustainable Maryland program. Finally, it will require the Governor, for Fiscal Year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter, to provide an appropriation of \$750,000 to the Fund.

As part of a faith community the Environmental Justice Ministry holds the interdependence of man and nature as a corps belief. The Climate crisis has endangered more lives through extreme weather events. This bill will provide continued funding for communities facing huge stormwater devastation during the continuing stronger storms and flooding events. A flooding event caused the death of a person in Montgomery County in an apartment building basement recently. Further, the bill will ensure more stormwater protections for the Chesapeake Bay and help insure cleaner water throughout the state of Maryland. The mandated appropriation in the annual State Budget Bill will continue to fund much needed training and projects.

A look at the history and the future of this program since 2011 shows the Program has:

- Created and trained more than 50 green teams in MD
- Certified 16 municipal stormwater management programs, supporting local WIP implementation and the targeting of investments to the basins with the greatest potential for meaningful water quality improvements

This bill will:

- Ensure that Maryland Municipalities more easily understand and identify the full slate of state, county, and non-profit programs that local governments, businesses, and residents can tap into for support of their sustainability efforts.

- Enable the expansion and enhancement of voluntary community sustainability actions across Maryland, inclusive of a small grants program to incentivize action; and
- Help communities implement their chosen actions with help from program tools, trainings, case studies, and other resources.

Please support and enact SB 0014 for all of the above reasons.

Nanci Wilkinson
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