

SB0471 - Environment - Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act

Date: February 15th, 2022

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Position: Favorable

Erin Kosloski, UMBC Campus Delegate - MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition

Hello Chairman Pinsky and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

My name is Erin Kosloski, and I am a senior at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County completing an individualized degree in Psycholinguistics Applied to Autism. I attend UMBC on a full-tuition scholarship as a Sondheim Public Affairs Scholar, and I am also proud to be UMBC's delegate to the MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition. I strongly support the FUTURE Act and urge you to adopt a favorable report.

I grew up in Catonsville, just a few minutes away from both Historic Ellicott City and Patapsco State Park. I witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of climate change during the so-called "thousand year rainfall events" of 2016 and 2018. Seeing the destruction of the trails in Patapsco where my cross country team and I spent years running was truly a wake-up call for me, and I was heartbroken to watch people lose their lives, livelihoods, and homes as Main Street flooded.

Compelled by these devastating floods and inspired by Greta Thunberg and the power of her youth-led "Fridays for Future" movement, I became an Eco-Ambassador with UMBC's Office of Sustainability. Over the course of two years, I learned and taught about the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainability, as well as sustainable practices around the world. The incredible experiences I had in that program help explain why the FUTURE Act's requirements to establish more Offices of Sustainability and to explore a sustainability general education requirement are so impactful. Working with my school's Sustainability Office has given me the knowledge and skills to build sustainable habits in my own life, and to take action at a larger scale. I want all Maryland college students to have that same opportunity. It is only right that the institutions where we live, learn, and spend our money, are doing their part by dedicating personnel and resources to addressing the climate crisis.

Perhaps one of the best opportunities my work with the Office of Sustainability brought me was the chance to serve as one of the formative members of MSCAC in the summer of 2020. With so many other things to worry about in the midst of a pandemic and a racial reckoning that turned our world upside down, college students from across the state came together with a common goal to help protect our state and our future. We have worked tirelessly ever since, spending thousands of hours brainstorming, researching, and working with experts to create the FUTURE

Act. This may be one of the most significant bills you hear this session because of the meaningful steps it would enact towards reducing Maryland's carbon footprint, but more importantly because of the positive impact you can have in the lives of college students for generations to come. I strongly urge you to adopt a favorable report, and do your part to leave our generation a world worth living in. Thank you.