

The Howard County hub of the Sunrise Movement supports the passing of HB1372, the Green Infrastructure Rebate Program, which would provide property owners in participating counties the ability to receive an incentive to put in place stormwater management infrastructure. We believe that many Marylanders would be willing to invest in stormwater management practices included under the bill such as the rain barrels, urban tree canopy, permeable pavement, etc. and believe in the positive effect these investments would have on communities around Maryland.

Many cities and towns in Maryland are threatened by severe storms and flooding, especially as these events appear to be rapidly increasing in frequency and intensity due to climate change. This trend has already impacted Old Ellicott City, located in Howard County, which has faced multiple “once in a century” storms and subsequent flooding events in the past few years. These floods have caused many of the businesses we know and love to relocate or shut down. As a Howard County citizen that visits Old Ellicott City frequently, it has been devastating to see the main street completely ruined. While communities like Old Ellicott City try to rebuild and install methods of stormwater management, the incentives this bill would provide would be a major source of encouragement to residents wanting to contribute to the new management practices and the protection of their homes. Climate change is an existential threat and Maryland, as a coastal and highly urban and suburban state, will continue to have to reckon with the severe weather events exacerbated by it. Any help will reduce the harm done to Maryland’s communities and will move us closer to stopping and reversing climate change.

The Green Infrastructure Rebate Program would ensure a higher quality of life for the state’s communities harmed by stormwater pollution and would encourage communities and property owners to help make their communities better protected against the threat of flooding that major urban and suburban areas will face in the coming years.

This bill would decrease stormwater pollution and flooding risk by:

- Encouraging the implementation of rain barrels, cisterns, urban tree canopies, rain gardens, pavement removal, permeable pavement, and green roofs
- Requiring the Department of Environment to work with participating counties to issue incentives for stormwater management projects undertaken by an individual, business, HOA or residential community, and nonprofits
- Ensuring the validity of green infrastructure and requiring highest level of care taken with green infrastructure projects and promising appropriate compensation for such care and quality

The Howard County hub of the Sunrise Movement fully supports the Green Infrastructure Rebate Program and asks for the Maryland General Assembly to pass the bill to empower citizens to help their communities reduce stormwater pollution and flooding risk. As an organization of young people, we look to current leaders to make decisions that will preserve communities like Old Ellicott City for our generation and beyond. We are glad that this issue has been undertaken by the General Assembly and thank them for their continued effort in helping Maryland adapt and evolve to fight climate change and its effects.

Thank you for considering our perspective and support in your deliberations.

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