



# ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER

## Favorable Testimony – HB 0814

Dear Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on this important legislation: HB 0814 – Statewide Green Business Certification Program as amended by Delegate Shetty.

The Department of the Environment’s Maryland Green Registry (MDE) program has proven highly successful at engaging Maryland’s business community in expanding the use of sustainable business practices and reducing the business sector’s environmental footprint. The dedication of MDE personnel, the tools and resources available through the program, and the ease of accessing the program have ensured its popularity among the business community. The study suggested in HB 0814 presents an opportunity to build on the success of Maryland Green Registry’s recognition program and lay the groundwork for a more robust voluntary statewide certification program for those businesses that are interested in achieving even higher levels of sustainability in the face of a changing climate and an increased demand for the business sector to achieve even greater benefits to the environment, economy, and society.

As an organization that has built a municipal sustainability certification program from the ground up, we are keenly aware of the critical need to engage a wide swath of stakeholders from the very beginning to ensure the development of a program that is meaningful and truly serves the needs of its audience, as well as a credential that is defensible. The study suggested in HB 0814 looks to examine successful local business certification programs in the state and elsewhere and leverage the solid reputation of the existing Maryland Green Registry program. It will give state agencies and the nonprofit and business communities a voice in shaping the structure and function of a statewide certification program.

Connecting consumers with businesses that are making sustainable choices is important to improving the quality of life for all Marylanders. A carefully thought-out statewide certification program rooted in foundation of the Maryland Green Registry and informed by an independent, broad-sweeping stakeholder engagement process will ensure the success of the program. We hope for a favorable report.

Jennifer Cotting  
Director