



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood

Committee: Education, Health and Environmental

Testimony on: SB0014 – Sustainable Maryland Program Fund - Establishment

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 9, 2022

Bill Contact: Senator Sarah Elfreth

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members across all districts in Montgomery County as well as a number of nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports SB0014 because it will provide a stable base of funding for the Sustainable Maryland (SM) Program, which helps municipalities across the state develop comprehensive sustainable community programs. Enhancing sustainability is crucial to adapting to climate change due to global warming.

SM is a certification program for municipalities in Maryland that want to go green, save money, and take steps to sustain their quality of life over the long term. SM is a collaborative effort between the Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Maryland and the Maryland Municipal League. SM provides grants, incentives, technical support in the form of trainings, access to support organizations, and guidance material. The SM program framework helps provide elected officials, municipal staff, and Green Team members across Maryland with the education and technical assistance needed to develop their own capacity to manage local sustainability issues comprehensively and to navigate other state and local programs so that they can take advantage of resources already available.

A growing number of communities throughout the state are deeply invested in pursuing local environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Establishing a stable, yearly Sustainable Maryland Program Fund as proposed in SB0014 will strengthen local efforts, ensuring that local groups can get the support they need to communicate the importance of sustainability to local elected officials and community members, fund on-the-ground projects, and learn about innovative solutions to local problems. Stable funding will also help coordinate local efforts and provide an incentive for more communities to take action. SB0014 will therefore help build community capacity to engage in sustainability projects across Maryland.

Stormwater management is an emphasis in SB0014. Stormwater management programs and other sustainability efforts will become crucial as climate change destabilizes our world. Many municipalities got money from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), and one of the

allowable uses is stormwater management. Therefore, it will be particularly helpful to have Sustainable Maryland certified to support municipalities in developing stormwater projects that qualify for ARPA.

We need more green teams in Maryland and more volunteers engaged in positive environmental change. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports SB0014 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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