



P.O. Box 278  
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**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB 971 – “Department of the Environment – Green Roof Grant Program”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: March 3, 2023**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports HB 971, which would establish the Green Roof Grant Program. Based on funding availability, the Maryland Department of the Environment would award grants and administer the Program. The Department would provide grants to eligible grantees of up to \$75,000 per year to support the construction of green roofs on commercial buildings. This bill also requires the Department to report to the General Assembly on the Program on or before December 31 every year. The green roof must cover 60% of the roof surface and be maintained for at least five years. The Department can recapture grant funds if the grantee fails to meet these requirements or obtain the proper permits.

There are numerous benefits to having a green roof. According to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) green roof report, green roofs have a national average payback of 6.2 years to building owners and occupants. In addition, the roofs provide significant social benefits in terms of carbon sequestration and other environmental measures.<sup>1</sup> Green roofs provide stormwater management by reducing stormwater flow up to 65% and delaying flow rate up to three hours, a crucial feature in today’s world of frequent severe storms. GSA analysis shows that green roofs last nearly twice as long as standard roofs and reduce energy use by cooling the building during summer months and insulating it during winter months. Green roofs can provide vital urban habitats for wildlife and reduce the urban heat island effect.<sup>2</sup> Studies by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also found pollution reduction effects from green roofs. For example, more than 700,000 square feet of green roofs in Kansas City installed between 1999-2020 resulted in emissions reductions of 384 pounds of nitrogen oxide, 734 pounds of sulfur dioxide, and 269 tons of carbon dioxide in 2020.<sup>3</sup>

Green roofs provide a variety of benefits to the environment and building owners. This grant program would promote their development in our state. We ask for a favorable report for HB 971.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/Cost\\_Benefit\\_Analysis.pdf](https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/Cost_Benefit_Analysis.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gsa.gov/governmentwide-initiatives/federal-highperformance-green-buildings/resource-library/integrative-strategies/green-roofs>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/using-green-roofs-reduce-heat-islands>