

**Favorable testimony re HB 993, Sen. Feldman**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment, March 28, 2024, 1:00 p.m.**

Chair Feldman and esteemed members of the committee, I am Jabari Walker, Sustainability and Energy Coordinator at Bowie State University and Co-Chair of the Education, Communication, and Outreach Working Group of the bi-partisan Maryland Commission on Climate Change.

The Commission stands with Delegate Stein in endorsing HB 993 for several crucial reasons. First, the bill helps to uphold Maryland's rich tradition of environmental stewardship, aiming to preserve the state's natural beauty and resources. This bill recognizes that climate change is a pressing threat to our environment, economy, and public health. Observing an annual Climate Education Week will raise much needed awareness about the causes and solutions of climate pollution on Maryland's vulnerable land, and the health & well-being of all Marylanders. This bill will help to foster partnerships with educational, research, community and faith-based institutions surrounding this awareness.

HB 993 has extraordinary support by renowned organizations, for which the Commission is grateful. We are also grateful to Ms. Mary Kay Connerton, Maryland's Teacher of the Year, and also spokeswoman for the Commission's

2024 Maryland Climate Education Teach-In. I would like to quote some of her written testimony from her written testimony for the House Bill:

*She wrote: "I applaud Delegate Stein and the General Assembly members working with teachers and community groups to make Maryland Climate Education Week a reality. It signifies commitment to our children.*

*We must equip our youth with climate competencies - their future depends on it. HB 993 is an easy, positive step to take."*

This cost-free legislation to simply create "Maryland Climate Education Week" showcases Maryland's leadership in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting public awareness of the state's climate goals and possible solutions, and will likely set a national precedent.

Thank you all for your consideration.

**Jabari S. Walker, MPA**

Sustainability & Energy Coordinator, Bowie State University

Co-chair: ECO Workgroup, Maryland Commission on Climate Change