



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 21, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 997 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Green Schools - Model Professional Development Facilities - Designation

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports the proposed legislation to create criteria for a model professional development facilities within the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Recreation (MAEOE). The Department is engaged as a statewide convener of environmental literacy through Project Green Classrooms, the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup, the Maryland Environmental Literacy Advisory Network, and the Mid-Atlantic Climate Change Education Collaborative.

The Department appreciates the intention of this legislation to bolster the nationally recognized Maryland Green Schools Program and to define a clear path for teachers, administrators, and facility managers to learn and implement more about green activities and projects. The addition of criteria will incentivize the implementation of sustainable school actions while promoting student and community engagement through the Maryland Green Schools Program.

As an environmental literacy partner, the Department would support the development of the new criteria with technical assistance through our role as the Co-Convener of Project Green Classrooms. In this role, DNR is responsible for "advising and supporting state leadership in the implementation and tracking of relevant Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement goals and outcomes." This work could contribute to MD's achievement of the Sustainable Schools Outcome of the 2014 Watershed Agreement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department is directed to serve as co-chair and provide staff support for the Project Green Classrooms (PGC) Initiative ([Executive Order 01.01.2017.12](#)). This role is managed within the Center for Conservation Education and Stewardship within Chesapeake and Coastal Service. One of the outlined responsibilities of Project Green Classrooms is to “Advise and support state leadership in the implementation and tracking of relevant Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement goals and outcomes as they relate to environmental education;” including the Sustainable Schools Outcome to “Continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on

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their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration projects.”

The Department’s Office of Outdoor Recreation was established to support and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and access to nature across the state through the five pillars of outdoor recreation including education and workforce development. The Office of Outdoor Recreation supports environmental literacy and stewardship through access to nature for students and adults.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill calls for the Department to coordinate with MSDE and MAEOE to develop a new set of criteria for model professional development facilities to be used to bring more schools and facilities into the green school program.

BY:

(To be offered in the Ways and Means Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 997

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 2, in line 12, strike “NUMBER” and substitute “**PERCENTAGE**”; and in line 15, after “ENVIRONMENTAL” insert “**LITERACY**”.