



Testimony Supporting HB0993
Commemorative Weeks- Maryland Climate Education Week
Health and Government Operations Committee
Thursday, March 14, 2024

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sonia Demiray, I am the co-founder of the Climate Communications Coalition, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition, the Climate Forest Campaign, the Asylum Seeker Solidarity Group, Eastern Forest Advocacy Group, and others, and a resident of Frederick County.

We thank Delegate Stein for introducing this important bill. Since our organization focuses on communications and outreach, we understand the impact a Climate Education Week Proclamation would have on awareness as well as on hands-on work contributed in support of Maryland's climate commitments. For this reason, our group whole-heartedly endorses the creation of a Maryland Climate Education Week.

While it is key that all information provided during this week be clear, complete, science and data-driven (no 'alternative facts' can be part of this program), a Climate Education Week has the power to create top-of-mind positioning of climate change, where it truly has to be. After all, the changing climate determines not only our current lifestyles but defines all of Maryland's future. Focusing the majority of communications during one week of the year on climate change, will help the general public understand what is happening, what the future holds, how each of us can help, and what needs to be considered in any plan.

With temperatures climbing much faster than expected, we also need to accelerate our mitigation and prevention actions. Clear and honest information supplied by local and state government agencies during the Climate Education Week, and amplified by corporate sponsors and media coverage, will spur a wave of activity and engagement that will accelerate our communities' readiness and resiliency. It can also inspire and kick off larger projects that can be completed throughout the year.

Finally, a Climate-Education Week will ensure that government, communities, educational institutions, and research facilities, all focus on climate simultaneously. This will not only improve productivity, it can also spark more cooperation, collaboration, and mutual support than we have seen in a long time. After all, nobody is safe from climate change and a Climate Education Week, where all Marylanders work together, learn from each other, and strategize to avoid the worst effects of climate change, can be the catalyst we need to generate mutual support and accelerate resiliency. We urge a favorable vote on HB0993. Thank you.

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