

CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 1102 and House Bill 997

Bill Description - Exactly as it appears on the bill on fiscal note

Date: February 21, 2024 Position: Favorable

To: House Ways and Means Committee From: Del. Sarah Wolek

<u>HB 997</u> - Green Schools - Model Professional Development Facilities - Designation HB 1102 - Maryland Green Schools - Website Update and Maintenance

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) SUPPORTS HB 1102 and HB 997.

These bills provide necessary infrastructure to assist schools in becoming Maryland Green Schools. Green Schools reduce our energy footprint and prepare the next generation to be critical thinkers and environmental problem solvers. While Maryland is a national leader in promoting green schools, we still only have 36% of schools certifying.

We need to prepare students to both be responsible citizens and consumers and to be the environmental problem solvers that our community and country will need in the coming years whether that be cleaning up the Chesapeake or mitigating climate change. The Green Schools program introduces students to sustainable practices and building solutions in the context of their schools and shows them that they can make a positive difference.

As a former classroom teacher, I can tell you that the academic lessons promoted by the MD Green Schools Program are some of the most engaging work that students may do in their K-12 careers. Investigating issues that affect them and their communities, doing hands on science and designing and carrying out solutions is incredibly empowering and academically valuable. Becoming a Green School helps to ensure that these opportunities are available to all students and that those practices continue even if teachers move on.

These bills are timely because we are experiencing huge turnover of teachers and administrators. We need to remove barriers and build supports to make it easier for schools to participate.

Conservation at the classroom level and at the school level not only teach valuable lessons, Green Schools practices have meaningful impacts on a school building's energy and waste footprints, indoor air quality and significant savings for school budgets.

HB1102 and HB 997 represent two simple effective supports that could be implemented to make sure that more schools become green schools. More green schools equal students who are healthier, more engaged in school and better prepared for the 21st century economy and to be responsible citizens.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 1102 and HB 997.

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