

Good Afternoon Chairperson Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, my name is Kevin Maxwell. I am a retired educator and here as the Chairperson of the Board of the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education. Let me begin by thanking all of you for your work to support the citizens of Maryland and your past support of our Green Schools Program. I would also like to thank Delegate Wolek and the additional sponsors of HB 997.

In my 42 years as a public-school educator, I have learned that it takes partnerships at all levels of government and across districts to reach the best outcomes. This bill is designed to identify model Green School professional development sites to support the work of expanding the number of Green Schools in our state. Among many benefits, these Model green schools will be used to train teachers, principals, and staff allowing them to make adjustments to their plans, after seeing examples of best practices and learning how to deliver lessons aligned to environmental literacy standards. Additionally, by adding a question to the green school's application asking "would you be interested in becoming a Maryland Model green school," MAEOE will know who is interested in showcasing their greening and sustainable achievements to help others succeed.

This will be another important asset in our work to meet the needs of environmental and outdoor education in our state. Maryland has been a national leader of this work and we wish to continue to lead. Your support of this bill will truly help. Please support House Bill 0997.

Thank you for your time.