



HOWARD COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

9200 Berger Rd. ■ Columbia, Maryland 21046 ■

Kim Pezza, Chair

2024 Environmental Sustainability Board Annual Report

To the County Executive and the County Council:

The primary responsibility of the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) is to advise the County Executive and County Council on matters related to environmental sustainability. Each year we produce an annual report that summarizes our activities and suggests priorities for the future. This year we worked closely with the Office of Community Sustainability (OCS) to support their efforts.

2024 Meetings

The board was led by Chair Kim Pezza and Vice Chair Holly Mays.

This year we added a Resident Speak out portion for each meeting.

The OCS Administrator kept ESB members updated monthly on the activities of OCS and asked for support on key items. We also got monthly Community Outreach reports to make us aware of environmental events in Howard County for us to attend, participate in or support OCS at.

OCS staff did presentations on:

- Trees and Ecosystem Services by Elissa Reineck & Bill Mahoney, OCS
- Howard County Electric Vehicle Efforts, Erin Vicelja, Community Energy Fellow, OCS
- Howard County Energy Work: Leah Miller, OCS
- Engaging the Private Sector on Clean Energy & Efficiency, Leah Miller, OCS

Other presentations from Howard County staff on:

- Bob Frances, Director of Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits,
- Tina Laboy, Deputy Director of the Office of Emergency Management

Throughout the year approximately ten different members of the community joined meetings.

Public Outreach Work Group

The Public Outreach Work Group is led by Heather Stiltner. The primary activities of this Work Group in 2024 consisted of assisting with the Sustainability Legislative Breakfast, the Green Apple Award, attending HoCo Green Fest and exploring ideas for outreach to the general public. In this third area, the OCS Outreach Specialist requested as much traffic as possible be directed to the Live Green Howard websites, newsletter, and social media accounts as their primary communication outlets with the public. The Work Group also wanted to make the public more aware of the ESB monthly meetings and has provided time at the start of each ESB meeting for residents to share their thoughts.

At Green Fest 2024, the Work Group participated at their own table in close coordination with OCS. The Work Group would like to be present at other community events in the coming year, either on its own or along with OCS. Throughout the year, the Work Group will help to promote the quarterly topics that OCS identified as top priorities.

Legislative Breakfast

On Jan. 8, 2024 the ESB held its 7th annual Legislative Breakfast. We brought in keynote speaker, Jamal Lewis, Director of State & Local Policy (Mid-Atlantic & South) Rewiring America Member, Mitigation Working Group, Maryland Commission on Climate Change. We then had presenters on 4 bills that were being drafted for the 2024 Maryland General assembly. Local elected officials joined for a Q&A as well. Nearly 80 people attended either virtually or in person.



The poster for the 6th Annual Howard County Sustainability Legislative Breakfast features a green header and footer. The main content area is white with a blue border. At the top left is a logo of two hands holding a globe. To the right of this is the title '6th Annual Howard County Sustainability Legislative Breakfast' in blue. Below the title is a detailed agenda with times and topics. At the bottom left is the 'LIVE GREEN HOWARD' logo, and at the bottom right is the 'Sponsored by' section listing Howard Community College, Howard County Conservancy, and Howard Hughes Corporation. The footer states 'Hosted by Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board'.

**6th Annual
Howard County Sustainability
Legislative Breakfast**

7:30 Breakfast & Networking
8:00 Welcome - HCC President, Dr. Daria Willis
8:05 Introductions and acknowledgements - ESB Chair, Kim Pezza
8:15 Keynote - Jamal Lewis, Rewiring America
8:25 Office of Community Sustainability Administrator Tim Lattimer
8:35 Howard County Conservancy Executive Director Meg Boyd
8:40 Legislative Bills
 1. Solar Siting - Kristen Harbeson, MD League of Conservation Voters
 2. RENEW - Jamie DeMarco, Chesapeake Climate Action Network
 3. EmPOWER Reform - Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG
 4. The Better Buildings Act - Doug Siglin, Chesapeake Climate Action Network
9:00 Q&A on bills
9:10 Q&A with Electeds
9:25 Closing remarks - ESB Chair, Kim Pezza

**LIVE GREEN
HOWARD**

Sponsored by:
Howard Community College
Howard County Conservancy
Howard Hughes Corporation

Hosted by Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board

Business Outreach Work Group

The Business Outreach Work Group was led by Larry Liebesman.

The Business Outreach Work Group focuses on educating and involving the Howard County business community as partners in achieving the goals of the HoCo Climate Action Plan. The Work Group meets periodically by zoom to strategize on the best way of involving the business community. This effort includes reaching out to the Howard County Chamber of Commerce, County Economic Development Authority and others. The Work Group will be setting up meetings and presentations with different sectors of the business community. This has included a very fruitful meeting with the Maryland Building Industry Association on March 5, 2024 where ESB member Larry Liebesman and OCS Administrator Tim Lattimer gave a presentation on the County's "Climate Forward" Plan and engaged in a very productive dialogue with the building industry on how the plan's goals are compatible with the economic goals of the homebuilding industry. The industry responded with some concerns and suggestions indicating a willingness to continue dialogue. Members met with DNR to discuss the Whole Watershed Act and opportunities for collaboration. The Business Outreach Work Group will consider the ideas, concerns and suggestions from the business sector in providing advice to County officials with the goal of ensuring that the business community is a real partner in achieving the goals of the Plan. Tim Lattimer also met with Leadership Howard County. We will follow up on that contact to reach leaders of the business community.

Next steps/Look ahead

In 2025 the ESB plans to support OCS with public education and community outreach for the "Climate Forward" plan. At our meetings we will be bringing in staff from several county departments to educate us about their work and inform us so we may be helpful in supporting the environmental and climate change work of the county.

Recommendations:

The ESB should find more ways to help OCS get the word out and increase awareness of programs, grants, and events.

OCS should work with HCPSS to address the lack of an HCPSS climate plan and work with Sunrise and HCPSS students to further their Climate plan proposal. ESB can utilize their student members in this effort.

OCS should work closely with DILP, the administration and the County Council to support new building code updates that require electrification of new construction and major renovations.

OCS should continue to work closely with the Columbia Association on all sustainability efforts and resilience efforts, such as creating Resilience Hubs.

The ESB should work with relevant County offices (including OCS and Finance) and other stakeholders to review the experience of other jurisdictions with green banks with a view to identifying pros and cons for the eventual creation of a similar entity to help local organizations (such as non profits and HOAs) in financing local climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Members During FY2024:

Brooke Abercrombie

Kim Davis

Larry Liebesman

Holly Mays

Tia Metzger

Dan Nees

Kim Pezza

Heather Stiltner

Greta Swanson

Brian Weinstein

Phil Webster

James J. Obasiolu (student member)