

Good Evening Members of the Howard County Council,

The Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board serves a very crucial role in our community: addressing environmental concerns to work towards a greener future. Each year, a student member is selected to bring in the youth perspective and represent our future environmental leaders. Thus, it is imperative for this individual to be experienced in environmentalism, passionate about sustainability, and dedicated to serving our planet. My name is Sonia He, and I am a rising senior at River Hill High School. I believe that I would be a great addition to the Sustainability Board, because I embody all of the abovementioned characteristics.

My passion for the environment began in my sophomore year of high school, when I conducted a year-long research project on various recycling signage to determine which type would be the most effective at encouraging students to recycle in a cafeteria setting. From this project, I was exposed to all of the environmental issues that our planet faces and saw the need for young people, like me, to take action. I also met other students who shared the same passion in the environment, and together, we formed the River Hill Green Initiative, a student-led organization dedicated to tackling environmental issues at our school. Over the past year, we have implemented many projects, including revitalizing our school's 2000 square foot rain garden, planting trees around campus, and spearheading a bathroom paper towel composting program. Beyond my work at River Hill, I worked with students from other high schools to organize the first-ever Howard County Environmental Symposium that brought together environmentally-inclined students from all over the County for booths showcasing environmental internship and volunteer opportunities and professional speakers, most notably Tim Foresman, former Chief Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

I am experienced, passionate, and dedicated. I have served the environment in the past, and I hope to continue serving the environment as the next student member of the Environmental Sustainability Board. I am truly grateful for this opportunity, and I would like to thank you for your consideration.