

Testimony - **CR161-2023** - Introduced by The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive  
A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of William Phillip Webster to the Environmental Sustainability Board.

Submitted by William Phillip Webster

Good evening Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about my qualifications to be a member of the Environmental Sustainability Board.

My wife and I moved our family to Columbia in 1994. Being from North Carolina, we were a long way from home and looking for community. One of the first things that we did in Columbia was join the UU Congregation of Columbia.

At the time, I was working in a Pentagon Program Office that acquired, managed, and operated SuperComputing Centers for military scientists and engineers. Armed with a PhD in Mechanical Engineering and experience modeling fluid flows as a Computational Aerodynamicist at the Air Force Research Laboratory, I was assigned to work with Computational Scientists, including those in Climate, Ocean and Weather as well as my more familiar Aerodynamicists, since the governing equations, data management requirements and solution methods were similar.

In 1998, I joined the Earth Science Directorate at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. With my previous experience I gravitated toward the Climate Scientists and had the opportunity to collaborate with many world renowned climate modelers and scientists including Jim Hansen, Gavin Schmidt and Max Suarez. Over time, I was promoted as the Director of the NASA Center for Climate Simulation, the premier NASA supercomputing center for Earth Science. NASA's weather and climate models were developed and tested in the Center.

In the 2015 timeframe, as concerns about climate change were growing, the UU Congregation of Columbia decided to form a "green team" and we started by looking inward, to how our facilities would be greener. I became the co-lead of the green team, the UUCC Climate Crisis team. The team has conducted training and awareness for our members, helped 75 families switch to Neighborhood Sun for solar electricity, encouraged and facilitated engagement in the political process, introduced plant-based diets and much more. Probably our biggest success is the emerging awareness of how we live here in Howard County, often negatively impacting other less fortunate communities nearby.

Upon retirement from NASA in 2017, I became the Climate Change Lead Advocate with the UU Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULMMD). UULMMD is a faith based advocacy organization encouraging members to contact their legislators on a variety of issues, including Climate Change. UUs subscribe to seven principles, two of which are particularly relevant to climate change, the second principle is "justice, equity and compassion in human relations" and the 7th "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

As Lead Advocate, I represent all UUs in Maryland in advocacy for climate affirming legislation to the Maryland General Assembly. We accomplish this by joining various climate and environmental justice coalitions across the state. We facilitate letters, emails, phone calls, submission of testimony, and participation in public demonstrations from our members to their State Legislators to support climate and justice legislation in Annapolis.

My wife and I are now Marylanders, and we plan to live out our days here in Howard County. We raised our children here and found the community that we were searching for when we arrived. It is time for me to give back to the community.

I have a unique set of experiences, skills, and perspectives that I believe would be extremely valuable to the Environmental Sustainability Board. I would relish the opportunity to serve Howard County as a member of the ESB and would appreciate your support.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.