



DEPARTMENT OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY,
SUSTAINABILITY & RISK**

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February 25, 2019

Dear AASHE STARS Steering Committee and interested readers,

On behalf of the University of Maryland (UMD), I am pleased to support and affirm our 2019 submission to the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). The UMD Office of Sustainability has worked closely with staff across campus to compile accurate, up-to-date information for this STARS Report. The data and descriptive information submitted in the report are also reflected through the stories presented in our biennial *SustainableUMD* magazine, which is highlighted in one of the Innovation Credits in our STARS Report, and on our SustainableUMD website (sustainability.umd.edu).

The University of Maryland continues to make progress toward our long-term sustainability goals, including carbon neutrality. By tightening our policies and through thoughtful individual action, we are getting very close to reaching our next major carbon target—reducing greenhouse gas emissions to half by 2020, compared to 2005. Over the last three years, we have significantly expanded renewable energy production on campus, eliminated over 6 million disposable items annually from the campus waste stream, rapidly expanded compost collection in our buildings, and greatly expanded support, training and opportunities for student-run sustainability outreach programming on campus. Students have made sustainability studies our most popular minor for the past five years. Faculty, staff and students have embraced a campus culture of sustainability, and each year they create more innovative ways to move us forward.

The university continues to lead in climate change research—in atmospheric and related sciences, technology for renewable energy, public health impacts and public policy research on how to implement changes from the bottom up and top down. Because climate change is a worldwide concern requiring cooperative action, the university has established important new relationships and taken a leadership role. The Maryland Energy Innovation Institute—launched in 2017 with \$7.5 million in state funding—aims to catalyze breakthrough research at academic institutions across the state and attract private investment in energy innovation and commercialization. We joined “America’s Pledge,” along with other private-and public-sector leaders, to keep our nation on track to meet the ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement. Along with other top research universities, we joined the University Climate Change Coalition to help local, state and county leaders and citizens work together to meet these goals. Our Center for Global Sustainability provides research support to “America’s Pledge” to quantify the impacts of this effort, and we are the research lead for the University Climate Change Coalition.

We welcome this opportunity to earn a STARS rating. Our University Sustainability Council tracks campus progress annually on many of the metrics included in STARS. These metrics have guided our Council in identifying areas for improvement, and implementing changes to keep us moving toward deeper sustainability.

The University of Maryland remains deeply committed to solving local and global sustainability challenges. Please contact Ms. Sally DeLeon, Senior Project Manager in the Office of Sustainability at (301) 405-3968, if you have any questions about our STARS Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen Kotlas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maureen Kotlas
Executive Director of Environmental Safety, Sustainability & Risk, University of Maryland

cc: Scott Lupin, Director, Office of Sustainability