May 11, 2023

Unidentified Speaker: Please welcome Senior Vice President and Provost Dr. Jennifer King Rice. (Applause)

Dr. Jennifer King Rice: Wow, it is great to see this room full of so many happy faces this morning. Good morning, everyone and welcome to the University of Maryland. We’re so happy to have you all. It is always a pleasure to host our partners from the federal government here on our campus and I am absolutely delighted to have Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan here today to talk about important environmental initiatives. I’d also like to extend a very warm welcome to Governor Wes Moore (applause) and to Congressman Glenn Ivey, both of whom are great friends to our university. (Applause) I’m also so pleased to be joined this morning by one of our extraordinary students here at the University of Maryland, Anushka Tandon. Thank you so much for being here this morning as well. (Applause) And of course, it’s so wonderful to see so many students and faculty and staff, local, state and governments leaders. This is a really important morning on our campus here at the University of Maryland. You know here at the University of Maryland we are taking on what we call the grand challenges of our time, with a significant focus on research and educational programs that aim to improve environmental health and address climate change. The science is clear, and the need is clear, both in how our planet is warming and how its impacts are already being felt, particularly in some of our most disadvantaged regions and neighborhoods. That’s why we have committed to making our campus carbon neutral by 2025. (Applause) We’re also committed to replacing nearly one thousand fossil fuel vehicles with an all-electric fleet by 2035. (Applause) Just this year as a part of our new Grand Challenges Grant Program, we invested nearly $15 million dollars in institutional funding towards 13 climate-related initiatives and let me just describe a couple of those so that you understand the commitment that we’re making. Distinguished university professor Dr. Ellen Williams is leading a project with federal and state partners to develop systems that can better predict climate related weather disasters and warn people who are in the path of danger. Our researchers and our students will engage together an experiential study across disciplines on our campus, performing data analysis and (inaudible) sensors and working with the State of Maryland to identify at risk communities and to connect them with the information that they need. And Environmental Health Professor Dr. Amy Sapkota is leading the Global Future Alliance to focus on climate change impacts at the intersection of food and water and energy and public health. Through a holistic and interdisciplinary and systems-based approach, the project aims to alleviate food and water insecurity, to protect environmental and global public health, and to bolster community resilience in a changing climate. As a land-grant public institution committed to advancing the public good, the University of Maryland looks forward to collaborating with our colleagues in the Environmental Protection Agency. Through our educational programs, our cutting-edge research, and our sustainability initiatives, we will make sure that higher education does its part to further the EPA’s mission to protect public health and to ensure access to clean air, land, and water. It’s now my privilege to introduce our next speaker, Lisa Thompson. Lisa is an Environmental Protection Specialist in the EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation and has led the development of air regulations in the power, oil, and gas sectors. She has also worked on energy efficiency, and renewable energy development for the Department of Defense and the (inaudible) National Laboratory. Please help me welcome Lisa Thompson. (Applause)

Lisa Thompson: Thank you Provost Rice. Hello everyone. My name is Lisa Thompson and I’m an Environmental Protection Specialist in EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation, and I’m truly humbled to be here today with these distinguished speakers, and with all of you. It’s fitting that we’re here at the university today because younger generations will be at the forefront of the climate movement. I’m proud to be one of the younger team members of a large and dedicated team who developed the proposal that the administrator will announce in a few minutes. Putting together a proposal like this is really a team effort. The proposal reflects years of work from so many dedicated people at EPA, many of whom are here today. Engineers, economists, public policy analysts, all come with a crucial role in the proposal’s development. The team also conducted outreach to seek advice and input from other experts as we worked to develop the proposals that makes critical reductions in the greenhouse gas emissions that threaten our climate, while ensuring that electricity remains readily available. We talked with experts from industry, states, universities, environmental organizations, and other parts of the federal government, and we’re grateful for their insight. Everyday I’m in awe of my fellow team members for their expertise, their professionalism, and their dedication to the environment. I feel so fortunate to have played a part in developing this proposal. I’ve worked on greenhouse gas emissions for my entire career, it’s work that I’ve always believed is important, but it took on a new urgency last year when I became a mom. When I look at my one-year-old daughter and I think about her future, I want a future for her that is safe and healthy. The standards EPA is proposing today, will provide critical protections for our planet, for my generation, my daughter’s generation, and the generations that come after her. It will also result in cutting tens of thousands of tons of harmful air pollution, pollution that’s known to endanger public health; especially in communities that have shown too long disproportionately (inaudible) from high pollution. I’m grateful to have a job where I can be part of a team that is working to protect our planet and our health for future generations. I’ve been at EPA for eight years. I’ve had many opportunities to learn and work on long and interesting and meaningful projects, and I’ve been fortunate to work with the most amazing group of colleagues, people who want us to have healthy futures for years to come. So, for those students in the audience who are thinking about careers in environmental protection, I hope they will consider a career at EPA. Thank you so much. Now I’m pleased to introduce Rochelle Ramsey-Walker, an industrial painter and representative of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. (Applause)

Rochelle Ramsey-Walker: Good morning, everyone. First, I just want to thank everyone who made it possible for me to share my story. My name is Rochelle Ramsey-Walker and I’m a proud member of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. My whole life I always wanted to be a painter. I remember when it began when I was a child watching Bob Ross on TV, I would try to emulate his paintings and learn from him. Fast forward years later, I joined a peer (inaudible) program in New York City called NEW, Non-traditional Employment for Women. While there I was introduced to an instructor from the IUPAT and she introduced me to the love of painting and really impressed me and encouraged me to apply. Now as a painter by trade, I am currently working with the District Council 51 to perform outreach to workers who are interested in roles like mine, and it’s truly a blessing. The IUPAT trains industrial coating and glass workers who exist in every aspect of the power sector, from workers who apply protective coatings to wind turbines to guarantee resiliency and withstand corrosion and harsh ocean environments, to those who install triple pane windows and panels to decarbonize our nation’s building sector. The IUPAT is at the forefront of the clean energy economy. When I first started there was a lot to learn, including the fact that performing industrial coatings on large-scale utility projects is a little different from what I learned from Bob Ross, but It offered the same pride in the craft, and it meant everything to me to begin my journey as a tradeswoman. There aren’t enough women of color like me in these roles like mines, and I’m hopeful that I see more women joining every day. An opportunity to learn a skill that you can take anywhere in the world, is an opportunity for all. And there are more opportunities on the horizon. With announcements like those today, with passage of key legislation, soon there will be even more good paying union jobs available to people all across the country, and from all across backgrounds. Whether you live in small towns in the middle of the country, or in a city on the coast, these jobs will reach every corner of every state. No matter your zip code, or where you live, or the money in your pockets, these jobs will be available to you. There are lots of pathways that we can shape our future and determine what a clean energy economy will look like. So, this is our chance to make sure that when we think of green technology or offshore wind, hydrogen, and so much more, we think of good paying union jobs. We think of women of color leading in those roles, and we think of people like me, and stories like mines. Unions like the IUPAT will be the leaders of that movement, but they will also be communities of people like you and me, people who know the value of a hard day’s work, and who are committed to fighting for the future that promises better for all of us. I’ve met the most incredible instructors, journeymen, foremen, who share their knowledge and instilled in me the desire to make my union proud. I hope that by sharing my story today, helps you want to make my union proud too. And that means continuing to fight for policies, rules, and regulations that give people like me access to strong union jobs and pathways for real growth. Thank you for listening. And I have the honor and privilege to introduce our next speaker, the Honorable Governor of the State of Maryland, Wes Moore. (Applause)

Wes Moore: Thank you. Good morning. Actually, this is a great morning, this is a great morning. First, let me just say, Rochelle, we’re so impressed by you and we’re so thankful for you. God bless you. God bless you. (Applause) Before I decided to run for governor, I ran into one of the largest poverty fighting organizations in this country. And one of the organizations that we funded was an organization called NEW, Non-Traditional Employment for Women, and I have been so inspired by the work that this organization did and does, but most importantly, I’ve been inspired by the product, right, for the fact that this is providing opportunities and openings for women to enter into workforce and career pathways that traditionally there have always been blocks, and ceilings, and excuses, and what this organization did was provide a whole new opportunity for people to be able to not just be a part of the larger American dream but create their own, people like Rochelle. So, I had to tell you, I am so proud of you. I am committed to making as many Rochelle’s as humanly possible here in the state of Maryland, and we got work to do together. (Applause) And it is wonderful being here amongst so many friends and partners. First of all, what’s going on College Park? It’s good being here back at the flagship. (Applause) I heard earlier that this is the last week of classes for many students. Last day? Excuse me. All of the students are like no, no, last day, last day. So, first of all students since it is the last day, for all of you that did very well, congratulations. I know this means a lot. For those who did not do as well, go Terps, and that’s what we say to all our Commander’s fans, there’s always next year. Sorry about that. Sorry Congressman. It really is a joy to be here on a day that is historic, a day that is important, a day that we are proud to see here, and a day that we know would not be here, if it were not for the work of partnership, and partnership in the truest sense of the word, because when you look around this room, that’s what you see, you see higher education, you see state government, you see the federal government, you see the private sector, you see students, you see non-profits, you see activists, you see everybody. Because that’s how change happens, and that’s what progress looks like, because progress is only going to be real if we’re moving in partnership, anything short of that is temporary, and anything short of that does not meet this moment. Just a few weeks ago I was proud to host folks from the University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability invited to the State Capitol to announce our new partnership between the university and the state, to track all progress on meeting emissions goals. And being very clear that there is a difference between goals and suggestions. Suggestions are things you can put out there and then you hope the people get to know (inaudible). Suggestions are aspirations that you can place out there without real measurements of accountability. That’s not what we’re doing here in the state of Maryland. We’re doing goals, because they will have plans, they will have frameworks, they will have partnerships, and they will have accountability, and they will be done in partnership, accountability partnerships, partnerships that are dynamic, partnerships that are robust, partnerships that are very proud the fact that we’re going to bring people together from all walks of life, all parts of the state, and all motivations, and partnerships that help us understand that this is not a time to pave over the cracks. This is a time for us to fix the foundations of what’s broken in our society, and in our world. And there is no better or more necessary partner to do this work, than what we have here with our federal team. First of all, I would say that I’m a very, very lucky man for the fact that I have the federal delegation, that I have with Congressman Ivey, so I want to say thank you for your leadership and it’s great having you here this morning as well. (Applause) And, also, when we talk about partnership with our federal team, that includes the Biden administration because the Biden administration has enacted the largest climate passage in the history of the United States. (Applause) The Biden administration has enacted a once in a generational infrastructure law to invest in clean transit and electric vehicles. (Applause) And the EPA, with our remarkable leader here, Administrator Regan, it is great to have you here. The EPA is taking important steps to move forward in this work with today’s regulation and the new announcement on emissions. I want to commend Administrator Regan, for not just your distinguished leadership, not just for the announcement today, but for the fact that you have been an absolute tireless advocate for the environment, and a tireless advocate for the next generation, and we’re so grateful to have you as a partner (inaudible). (Applause) Thank you. Now I remember when I was running for governor, it wasn’t that long ago actually, but I remember once when we were doing an address and as you all might have heard, for possibly the past two years, I’ve been very progressive and bullish on what I wanted Maryland’s goal to be when it came to addressing this issue of climate, unapologetically so. Yes, and I remember I was in Baltimore, and I was giving a speech in front of a group of people, and one of the people came up to me afterwards and asked me, they said, “you know, we heard what you had to say, interesting you talk a lot about the environment and climate change and things you want to do if you become the governor (inaudible) on climate change, but he questioned me and he said, I just want to know why you’re speaking about so much that does not impact us here?” And I found it really interesting because the point of what he was trying to say is saying you know, you’re coming here, and I’m a Baltimorean so I have no problem, I’m coming home, right? So, I’m speaking about issues that matter and things we need to get done, and he’s saying you know you’re coming here to speak about issues that really don’t impact people who live in low-lying areas, or in farmland. And my response back to him was this, the truth is that climate change does not only impact people in low-lying areas or farmland, it impacts every community, and in fact, for those who live in the low-income communities, or communities of color, must believe that it’s impacting us most. Because when we talk about what does progress look like, and what disparities look like, when we’re talking about climate change, we’re not just talking about the fact that we’re having hotter summers or rising sea levels, we’re talking about kids who have to leave school when it’s either 90 degrees, or 15 degrees, because we do not have sufficient HVAC systems, or we do not have infrastructure, that is prepared for a changing climate. We’re talking about children in Baltimore, who are suffering from asthma at double the rate of anywhere else in this entire state and it’s not because when they are born their lungs are weaker. We’re talking about a reality, of power plants, of factories, that are spewing toxins into the air and into the lungs of our friends and our neighbors and our children. So, at this historic moment, in this life of a nation, in the life of this planet, in this life of our state, our job is to ensure that we do not miss this moment, and our job is to make sure that everybody understands how this is impacting everybody and not just some. But our job is to take this moment seriously, and it’s time for us to be bold. And so today, the EPA is taking on a kind of bold action that we need to ensure that we do not miss this moment. So, Mr. Administrator, I want you to know that Maryland has your back. (Applause) And I want you to know that I want Maryland to be your best practice. That we are moving fast in this state, and that we are going to be unapologetic about it. It’s the reason why in just a little over 100 days we have already announced that we are going to be quadrupling our goals for energy produced by offshore wind, which by the way when we get to 8.5 gigawatts, it will power three million homes here in the state of Maryland alone. (Applause) It’s why here in the state of Maryland we are building out clean transit, we’re investing in electric vehicles and yes, by 2035 all new vehicles sold in the state of Maryland will be EVs and we will be electrifying the grid in order to help us get there. (Applause) And we are going to do it in a way that it provides good jobs, economic opportunities, for men and women, providing pathways for work, wages, and wealth, for all Marylanders, and not just some. And here’s what I know, the reason we’re going to get it done is because it’s not just the fact that we are moving in a unified fashion here in the state of Maryland, it’s because we have the federal partners who are going to help to make it so. But we can be bold in the state of Maryland, and we will, but we’re being bold because we have a federal partner that is going to provide the air cover for that to happen. And so, we’re going to have a future that doesn’t just focus on the challenges of now but focuses on the opportunities of tomorrow future where the air is clean, a future where our kids can thrive no matter what their background or zip code, a future where power is drawn from nature instead of being constantly in conflict with it, a future that’s not just cleaner and greener, but a future that’s more prosperous, and a future when we talk about progress everybody in the state knows that we’re talking about them, and not just things that don’t impact them. We don’t have to choose between a green economy and growing one. We can and will have both. And this is what a green future in the state of Maryland looks like. This is what an inclusive state looks like, this is what our future in the state of Maryland is going to require, and this is what leave no one behind looks like in action. And so, we’re thankful for today, we’re thankful for each and every one of you for all you’ve done to get us to this point. We are so incredibly grateful to the Biden administration, and to you Mr. Administrator and your team, for your leadership on this, and we’re ready to get to work. So, bless you all and thank you so much. (Applause)

Anushka Tandon: Hello, my name is Anushka Tandon, and I am an Environmental Science and Technology major, with a concetration in eco-tech design, and a sustainbility minor here at the University of Maryland in College Park. Growing up not too far away in Northcreek, I saw first hand the effects of erosion and deforestation on the ecosystem in my own back yard. Small dirt pads that were once blooming with lush green growth, are now bare, with little to no greenery. I watched as a clear stream cutting through a riverbank became a muddy creek, full of trash through an eroded riverbank. Watching this loss within the span of my childhood, fueled my passion for the environment and led me to pursue studies in the environmental science field. I am currently serving as the Environmental Science and Technologies Department Restore Club Vice President, and I will be serving as president next academic year. (Applause). I am also serving as Chapter Secretary at UMD Manors, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences, and will be serving as vice president next academic year. My involvement within the university’s Office of Sustainabilty over the last four semesters as a Sustainability Advisor Outreach Ambassador and Leadership Development Intern, have pushed me to learn more about behavior science and human impacts, within climate change and the sustainability realms. This university has given me a space to thrive and grow under the guidance and support of my professors and peers. My generation is fighting for the future of our planet. We are fighting every day to make sure that the future is liveable and healthy for all. The climate crisis is here, and will have immeasurable impacts on health, our communities, and our ecosystems. We must act now, and we must act swiftly. It is my honor to introduce our next speaker, EPA Administrator Michael Regan. (Applause) Like me, Administrator Regan had a passion for the natural world around us. He studied Earth and Environmental Science as an undergrad at North Carolina A&T State University. He is the first EPA administrator to have graduated from an HBCU, and the first black man, and second person of color, to lead the EPA. Administrator Regan’s success and passion for making positive change began at home, as a son of two public servants. During his time as administrator, he has pushed for policies that combat climate change, while reducing air pollution, and accelerating our transition to cleaner, more efficient energy. Administrator Regan’s commitment to environmental justice has been clear since the start of his career. As he fundamentally believes that all people deserve clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink. I watched as the park behind my house deteriorated throughout my childhood, and I plan to watch it be restored through my adulthood. Administrator Regan’s work and success marks him as a role model for myself and other young activists. Please join me in welcoming EPA Administrator Michael Regan. (Applause)

Administrator Michael Regan: Well, thank you Anushka for that wonderful introduction and thank you for all your leadership. We are all so proud of you. I also want to thank Lisa Thompson from the Office of Air and Radiation. Lisa, thank you for having that seat at the table. You know, listening to our young people, we’re doing more than that. Not only are we listening, we’re also involving young people because they deserve a seat at the table. I’d like to give a special shout out to our career staff, or the non-young people (inaudible). You know, this announcement would not have been possible without your persistence and your preservation, your heart, and your commitment to protecting all communities from harmful air pollution, so thank you all. Governor Moore, thank you. (Applause) Governor Moore it’s great to see you today. You know you all have an energetic governor; incredible leadership, incredible partnership, we value that, we thank you governor. Representative Ivey, thank you for being here. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to your communities. I also would like to thank the Senior Vice President and Provost, Jennifer Rice King (applause) King Rice, sorry, and the University of Maryland for hosting us. I’d also like to thank Dr. Sacoby Wilson, Director of the Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health, (applause) right here at the university. And I’d like to thank the staff and the faculty at UMD who had a hand in pulling together this remarkable event, I’m humbled and I’m grateful. Listen, I agree with the governor, it takes partnership, and it takes all of us growing in the same direction. But for a brief moment governor, I’m going to talk to these young people on their last day of class. Because the best moments of my job as EPA administrator are times like this when I engage with young people. Without fail, I’m energized, and I’m inspired by your spirit, your passion, and your commitment to holding your government accountable and holding your leaders accountable. Time and time again, history has shown that the younger generations are always at the front of social and political change. There was a group of North Carolina A&T State University students who refused to vacate a segregated lunch counter in 1960. Catalyzing a national civil sit-in movement that played an integral role in desegregating this great nation. It was a group of student-activists who led nationwide protests to lowering the national voting age from 21 to 18, arguing that if 18 is old enough to fight, and potentially die for your country, 18 is indeed old enough to have a say in your country’s democracy. Their campaign led to the 26th Amendment of the United States Constitution, adopted in 1971. And, in fact, the very first Earth Day in 1970 was led by students and grassroots activists who envisioned a cleaner and healthier world where all people could thrive. You see every generation has its own defining challenge, one that shapes countless lives, and impacts the future for decades to come, and climate change is that challenge for you. Your participation, your ideas, your voice will aid in shaping the course of history, because scientists have long warned the world about the changes in the Earth’s weather patterns and have been driven by human activity. It is your generation that has picked up the mantle and pushing progress forward in a way that this world has never seen before. All across the country you are sounding the alarm, demanding action, and sparking a global movement to address the urgency of the climate crisis. Folks it is very important for you to know that we see you, that we hear you, and I am certain that President Biden does as well. That’s why when President Biden took office, he launched the most ambitious climate agenda in United States history. Because at every corner of our nation Americans are seeing and feeling the devastating impacts of climate change. From the uncontrollable wildfires out West that have engulfed entire communities in a matter of hours, forcing families to abandon their homes and the lives that they once knew, to devastating hurricanes throughout the Gulf and on the East Coast, that have swept away homes and businesses, leaving only remnants of destruction in its path, all while prolonged drought threaten our food production and ocean warming fuels more catastrophic and destructive storms (inaudible) lives across this country and around the world. And it’s clear that we’ve reached a pivotal point in human history, and it’s on all of us to act right now to protect our future. This administration is committed to meeting the urgency of the climate crisis, and taking the necessary action required. And guess what, EPA is central to that commitment. Because at EPA we’re taking decisive climate action under the Clean Air Act, that when fully realized would reduce the equivalent of more than 15 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution between 2022 and 2055. For perspective, that’s equivalent to nearly ten years of carbon dioxide pollution from the entire power sector, or equal to roughly three years of U.S. carbon pollution. So, folks first we issued a proposal that would reduce methane from the oil and natural gas sector. Second, we’re phasing out the U.S. production and consumption of HFCs by 85%. When releasing to the atmosphere HFCs can have a climate impact thousands of times stronger than carbon dioxide. Third, just last month, we proposed new standards for cars, trucks, and heavy-duty vehicles, that when finalized, will set the strongest pollution standards for greenhouse gases and other harmful air pollutants in EPA’s history. And today, I’m proud to yet announce another step by EPA to combat the climate crisis. Today, we’re proposing new technology standards that will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel fired power plants, protecting health and protecting our planet. When finalized, these technology standards are expected to avoid 617 million metric tons of carbon dioxide by the year 2042. Folks, that’s equivalent to the annual emissions of 137 million cars and passenger vehicles, roughly half the annual U.S. car emissions for all U.S. car emissions over a six-month period. As a matter of fact, in 2021 the power sector was the largest stationary source of greenhouse gas emitted 25% of overall domestic emissions. Not only will this proposal improve air quality nationwide, but it will bring substantial health benefits to communities all across the country; especially our frontline communities, our environmental justice communities, communities that have unjustly born the burden of pollution for decades. At EPA we’re working every single day to ensure that all people, no matter the color of your skin, the money in your pockets, or the community that you live in, realize the full protection of our environmental laws, and today’s announcement only solidifies our commitment to protecting those who are most vulnerable among us. Now the good news is our work is not sacrificed, these aren’t restrictions as some would say, this is about seizing the moment, and understanding that we have an obligation to not only leave behind a healthier planet for generations that will come after us, but to leave behind a fairer and more just society, to leave behind a nation with a thriving economy, good paying jobs, and energy security. Folks this is our future we’re talking about, and we have a once in a generation opportunity for real climate action. So, failure is not an option, indifference is not an option, inaction is not an option, and let me be clear, it’s not about party affiliation, it’s not about politics, it’s about uniting as a society, as a nation, as a people, for the greater good of humanity. It’s about recognizing and acknowledging that we may not exactly agree on the how, but we must agree on the what. We may not see eye to eye on every policy or every solution, but we have to understand that we are all in this fight together. Now there’s no question that we have a lot more work to do, but so much of what we have achieved, so much of what President Biden has achieved already, is because of you, because of the younger generation, because your generation worked to ensure that climate change is the topic of conversation on the world stage. And it is important that you never forget how vital your role is in creating and demanding a cleaner, healthier, and more just world. And for that reason, I’m proud to announce that I am proposing the establishment of a brand new federal advisory committee, the National Environmental Youth Advisory Council. (Applause) This committee, the first of its kind, will give young people, as young as 16, the opportunity to make recommendations directly to me and all of the staff at EPA, because young people always deserve a seat at the table. The work is not yet done, and we need you, we need all of you, every single one of you. We need your courage, we need your compassion, we need your sense of justice, we need your ambition, because we have to get this right. We only have one planet, and your voices will play a crucial role in ensuring that we do this right. Thank you so much. (Applause)