



March 1, 2023

To: West Virginia House Education Committee
Re: Public Comment regarding Senate Bill 619

Committee Members,

The National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT) is a community of more than 1400 educators and education researchers working together to improve teaching and learning about Earth. Our members are college and university faculty, K–12 teachers, informal educators, graduate and undergraduate students, and geoscience and education professionals. Together, we are leading the way in promoting and supporting high-quality Earth education that is accessible to all. As such, we recognize the importance of robust, research-supported, science standards at the K-12 level. It is our recommendation that you do not pass Senate Bill 619 out of Committee.

SB 619 will allow, and possibly encourage, some teachers and administrators to deviate from the science curriculum and introduce information that will confuse students. By allowing deviation from science curriculum regarding ideas as foundational to science as evolution, this bill threatens to make West Virginia's students unprepared for college coursework and for careers that depend upon solid understandings of science. Weakening the curriculum in this way also makes West Virginia less appealing to science-based industries and professionals – and the jobs and dollars they bring.

NAGT maintains that scientific theories should be taught to students of all grade levels without distraction of non-scientific or anti-scientific influence. NAGT recognizes that invoking non-naturalistic or supernatural events or beings, often guised as "creation science," "scientific creationism," or "intelligent design theory," are not scientific in character, do not conform to the scientific usage of the word theory, and should not be part of valid science curricula.

We urge you to reject the changes to the West Virginia science curricula because we believe that they will put West Virginia students behind their peers across the country and around the world in their ability to live and work successfully in the modern world. Please keep West Virginia's science classrooms and students on track. Oppose the passage of Senate Bill 619.

On behalf of NAGT,

Anne E. Egger
Executive Director, NAGT