

Submission date 2/14/2022

HEARING DATE: 2/15/2022

BILL: SB0135 - SPONSOR: Senator Benjamin Kramer
TITLE: Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (CCEJ)
POSITION: Favorable
COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs &
Budget and Taxation

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Roslyn Watts and I live in District 37, Subdistrict 37B

Smithville is home to a predominately African American community that was founded and populated by a small group of first- and second-generation freed slaves and their descendants.

The community is nestled inland a few miles away from the Chesapeake Bay and has been **battered by the effective of climate change, sea level rise and environmental justice issues.** Historically, this community was graced with beautiful woodland, timber, and good soil for family gardens. **However, due to marsh encroachment, increased tidal flooding and the invasive migration of phragmites, property owners have lost large portions of their land.**

When community members sought to remedy the effectiveness of the marsh migration, and effectiveness of the phragmites, they were prohibited from doing anything; being told **“these were protected vegetation and protected habitats.”** Over time, coupled with sea level rise, the homes of my people, our properties and **including our historic family cemetery is in imminent danger due to increased flooding, tidal changes, basically, the erosion and loss of land.**

Research from universities, environmentalist and local authorities indicate that **we need further studies and remediation.** The Climate Action Plans that the CCEJ will provide funding for, are needed to preserve these properties and human habitats. **Mediation is doable, but costly, so the revenue from this bill is “KEY” for us to survive.** We believe that we can save our land and our cemetery, but actions and resources must be made available **quickly and decisively.**

Climate change is affecting our world. This bill develops the resources we need to address these issues.

Roslyn Watts
Member
Families of Smithville Road, Inc.
443-521-6274

Cc: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee & Budget and Taxation