



**Committee:** Economic Matters and Environment & Transportation  
**Testimony on:** HB0473 - Environment – Ambient Air Monitoring –  
Particulate and Fine Particulate Matter  
**Organization:** Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing  
**Submitting:** Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 15, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB473. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB473.

HB473 requires that on or before January 1, 2026, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) must deploy ambient air monitors to track levels of particulate matter and fine particulate matter in all census tracts with an average median income at or below 80% of the State average median income and to prioritize overburdened and underserved communities. In addition, the bill requires MDE to provide public, internet access to air monitoring data and related information, and take the data into consideration before approving air emissions permits. Finally, the Air Quality Control Advisory Council must report to the General Assembly on the ambient air monitoring program.

The MLC Climate Justice Wing supports policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also benefitting overburdened and underserved communities. Overburdened communities are in census tracts that are disproportionately affected by more environmental health indicators. Underserved communities are in census tracts with a higher number of low-income residents who are also nonwhite and have limited English-proficiency. HB473 directs greater attention by MDE to tracking particulate air pollution monitoring in these communities.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, particulate air pollution, especially small particles less than 10 micrometers in diameter, pose serious health threats, because they can get deep into the lungs and even the bloodstream. Exposure to such particles can affect both the lungs and heart. Scientific studies have linked particulate pollution exposure to health problems, including: premature death in people with heart or lung disease; nonfatal heart attacks; irregular heartbeat; aggravated asthma; decreased lung function; and increased respiratory symptoms, such as coughing

or difficulty breathing. People with heart or lung diseases, children, and older adults are the most likely to be harmed by particle pollution exposure.

In order to address particulate air pollution, especially in the communities most affected historically, adequate monitoring data is a first step. HB473 requires MDE to take this step and to use the data in permitting decisions. For these reasons, we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for HB473 in committee.