

**St. Mary's County Branch #7025**

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Testimony – HB0473
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The Environmental Climate Justice Committee of the NAACP St Mary's County Branch #7025 submits this testimony in support of HB473 Ambient Air Monitoring. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is the nation's most influential and enduring civil rights organization. The #7025 Branch has over 300 local members and supporters.

According to a recent EPA study, Black, Asian, and Latin Americans are disproportionately impacted by particulate matter pollution. We have seen that health disparities have only been highlighted and exacerbated during the global health pandemic. Making sure residents in overburdened and underserved communities have air pollution data is critical to take steps to improve environmental health outcomes.

St Mary's County is proud to already be the home of the BreatheWell St Mary's Health Initiative begun during the pandemic thanks to the action and decisions of the Equity TaskForce and its representatives from the Health Department, Sheriff's Department, and School system. The real-time dashboard can show residents the air quality across the county at each one of the local public schools and other key places of community interest. It allows the health department to study the impact of environmental concerns and public access to real-time air quality data.

Race—even more than class—is the number 1 indicator of where a toxic facility will be located in the United States. This is an environmental and climate injustice to Black and Brown communities. Environmental injustice is about people who have died and others who are chronically ill because of exposure to toxic pollution. HB 473 takes a step towards resolution with the important provisions in this bill that prioritize placement based on income, the definitions of overburdened and underserved communities, and requirements of community consultation and minimum standards of public input and engagement.

We thank the delegate for this proposal that highlights the need for addressing the issue of air pollution and the example that St Mary's has made for statewide action. We respectfully request a favorable report on HB473.

Respectfully,

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