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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Chair

Health Occupations and
Long-Term Care Subcommittee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the House Environment and Transportation Committee

in Support of

House Bill 310

Environment and Energy –

Investment in Communities With Low- to Moderate-Income Households

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thanks, in large measure, to this committee’s dedicated efforts and oversight, Maryland has been a leader in addressing issues of environmental justice and the impacts of climate change.

Still, the environmental and economic effects of climate change loom large over our coastal state, and larger still over our historically burdened and disadvantaged communities. The 2001 creation of the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to advise state agencies was a useful first step toward directing attention toward these issues.

But the time has now come for more robust action. Maryland should follow the example of New York state, where the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, adopted in 2019, requires that at least 35% (with a goal of 40%) of investments in clean energy be directed to disadvantaged communities.

House Bill 310 would do just that, by requiring that at least 40% of spending on a range of state environmental and climate-change related programs, projects, and investments benefit communities with low- to moderate-income households, beginning in 2025. The bill would apply not only to green infrastructure, climate change, clean energy and similar projects and investments – but also to training and workforce development in these areas.

Moreover, this legislation would hold the Department of the Environment accountable by requiring it to (a) hold public information gathering sessions throughout the state to gather input from communities with low-to-moderate income and the public, and (b) submit an annual report of its activities and recommendations to the governor and the Maryland General Assembly.

I urge a favorable report on HB 310.

February 15, 2023