



TESTIMONY FOR HB0473

Environment - Ambient Air Monitoring - Particulate and Fine Particulate Matter

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo

Committee: Economic Matters

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0473 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

It is no surprise that the air quality, and attendant health issues are much worse in overburdened and underserved communities in this state. This is due to decades of governmental approvals to install toxin-emitting infrastructure in those communities (processing facilities, incinerators, coal-fired power plants, and superhighways). Those communities complained when they were targeted for the infrastructure and also when their children and families started suffering from the effects of that infrastructure. But their voices were not loud enough.

We know that past decisions have put a tremendous burden on these communities, but we have never bothered to figure out just what is happening to the air quality in those areas. This bill would direct the Department of the Environment to deploy ambient air monitoring equipment to each of these communities by July 2026 and to publish the results of that air quality monitoring. This will help the residents of these communities protect themselves and mitigate the harm when the air quality is particularly bad. Additionally, this data will become the basis for decisions to approve or disapprove any new infrastructure in the affected areas.

We need this data. As a state, we have been making decisions blindly that have deep consequences for the health of whole communities. Polluters have taken no responsibility for the toxins they have put into the air. This data will help identify the scope of the problem and will be instrumental in making better decisions in the future and ensuring that businesses are more responsible to the communities they are located in.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.