

HB0842_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0842 – FAVORABLE
Environmental Justice - Investment in Infrastructure Construction Projects

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0842, Environmental Justice - Investment in Infrastructure Construction Projects

Maryland has identified what is meant when we say a community is overburdened and underserved. The following seven populations were determined to be vulnerable – based on an understanding of both federal requirements and regional demographics: ¹

1. Poverty
2. Non-Hispanic, Non-White
3. Hispanic
4. Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
5. Disabled
6. Elderly
7. Carless

This bill attempts to remediate racial and environmental and other harms visited on these populations by directing some of the federal funding Maryland receives for infrastructure projects to projects affecting these populations and communities. It acknowledges that historically the funding for these Maryland residents and communities has been minimized or missing. It will create a Justice40 Committee to advocate, acquire, and monitor how funding infrastructure is done to achieve this 405 goal.

This bill makes the moral and ethical commitment to resolving past deprivations in infrastructure. Maryland’s commitment is “We must ensure that communities of every culture, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background get fair protection from environmental and health hazards, as well as equal access to the decision-making process for environmental policies.” ² **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0842.**

¹ <https://www.baltometro.org/transportation/data-maps/vulnerable-populations-index>

² https://mde.maryland.gov/Environmental_Justice/Pages/Landing%20Page.aspx