



## Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1086

### Environment - Environmental Justice Districts - Designation and Requirements

Senate - Education, Energy, and Environment

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

February 27th, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB1086 -Environment - Environmental Justice Districts - Designation and Requirements**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 120,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families in Maryland.

In particular, CASA is invested in seeing this bill pass, because our members populate some of the most polluted communities in the state. Many of these areas are covered by the definitions of overburdened and/or underserved. I want to highlight 2 communities where our members live that would be eligible for the Environmental Justice district designation and the protections that would come from it.

Take Census Tract 8002.09 for example, which includes the city of Laurel, in Prince George's County. This low-income majority-minority community is surrounded by land restoration program sites, active air emission facilities, solid waste facilities, and wastewater discharge facilities. The residents of this community are exposed to countless toxins and are in proximity to present and historic hazardous materials.

Lastly, consider Census Tract 7016.02 in Montgomery County, which is located slightly Northwest of Langley Park in Silver Spring. This community reports a 50% poverty rate, 25% limited English proficiency, and an upper 90 percentile sensitive populations score on the EJ screening tool. In this higher-density area, you can find the massive apartment community, Northwest Park Apartments, which is triangulated by New Hampshire Avenue, University Boulevard, and 450. The level of traffic-related air pollution here puts an extreme pollution burden on the residents here.

Passing SB1086 would allow individuals from these communities to apply their jurisdiction for the EJ district designation. This designation would aid in preventing further pollution burden to communities that are already vulnerable to the effects of pollution and/or in proximity to a disproportionate amount of pollution. For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

Jose Coronado-Flores

Research and Policy Analyst

[jcoronado@wearecasa.org](mailto:jcoronado@wearecasa.org), 240-393-7840