HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

A House Joint Resolution concerning

Environmental Human Rights

FOR the purpose of reaffirming the principle enshrined in the Maryland Environmental Policy Act that every person has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment; requiring the State to rededicate itself, its agencies, and all concerned stakeholders to furthering the development, implementation, and enforcement of certain environmental laws, practices, and policies for the benefit of both current and future generations; and generally relating to environmental human rights.

WHEREAS, We, the members of the 2023 Maryland General Assembly, recognize the singular natural beauty of our State, the quiet grandeur of the Chesapeake Bay, the majesty of the Appalachians, the verdant lands of the Piedmont, and the abundant gifts of the coastal plain of the Eastern Shore; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that all living things are dependent on a healthful environment; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that the full expression of human dignity is incompatible with a degraded environment; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that a sustainable, regenerative ecosystem and stable climate are essential to support a vibrant society and economy; and

WHEREAS, We, like our ancestors before us, are the guardians of the earth for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), which passed with nearly unanimous support in the House and the Senate in 1973; and

WHEREAS, MEPA recognizes that each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment; and
WHEREAS, MEPA states that “the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the State’s diverse environment is necessary for the maintenance of the public health and welfare and the continued viability of the economy of the State and is a matter of the highest public priority”; and

WHEREAS, MEPA enshrines the obligation of all State agencies to conduct their affairs with an awareness that they are stewards of the air, land, water, and living and historic resources, and to protect the environment for the use and enjoyment of this and all future generations; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of states, along with 161 nations of the global community, including the United States, have recognized the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the principle enshrined in MEPA that every person has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment is hereby reaffirmed; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the State shall rededicate itself, its agencies, and all concerned stakeholders to furthering the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, practices, and policies, as called for by MEPA, for the benefit of both current and future generations; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to the Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland; the Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; and the Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates.