

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

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By: **Senator Waldstreicher**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2023

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Environmental Human Rights**

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 WHEREAS, 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the Maryland Environmental Policy Act
22 (MEPA), which passed with nearly unanimous support in the House and the Senate in
23 1973; and

24 WHEREAS, MEPA recognizes that each person has a fundamental and inalienable
25 right to a healthful environment; and



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1 WHEREAS, MEPA states that “the protection, preservation, and enhancement of
2 the State’s diverse environment is necessary for the maintenance of the public health and
3 welfare and the continued viability of the economy of the State and is a matter of the
4 highest public priority”; and

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

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

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

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

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