



The above-signed organizations urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass the Maryland Constitutional Amendment to Environmental Health & Justice (House Bill 517).

Maryland communities face tremendous challenges — from polluted air and contaminated water to rising sea levels propelled by climate change — and government policies currently are not doing enough to protect us. The lack of true environmental safeguards negatively impacts all aspects of our lives and threatens future generations.

While we’ve seen piecemeal progress over the past few years, policy decisions by elected leaders are more focused on managing pollution and degradation rather than preventing pollution. State and federal regulations contain too many gaps that legally allow pollution to harm the health of our families, friends and communities—especially low-income communities and communities of color. Our ability to push back against these injustices—and their negative impacts on our health—is hampered. The federal government’s recent rollbacks of long-standing federal safeguards worsen these threats.

Every Marylander, in every generation, has the fundamental, constitutional right to clean water, clean air, a stable climate, and a healthy and healthful environment. This right is on par with the freedoms of speech and religion and provides a wealth of legal protections. It increases the likelihood of environmental justice and promotes a different mindset among elected officials to prevent pollution rather than just manage it, factoring this protection into all policy decisions. Should this guaranteed constitutional right be infringed upon, communities would be empowered to defend this right and the courts would be available as a backstop to seek redress.

Please ensure our right to a healthy environment and environmental justice today! We urge you to pass House Bill 517.