

HB 517 Environmental Rights Amendment Testimony, Ethan McNary

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Committee members, thank you for having me. It's good to be here to speak on behalf of House Bill 517. My name is Ethan McNary and I live in Towson, Maryland. I firmly believe that the right to a healthy and sustainable home is the most basic human right of all.

As a living species, humans require a livable Earth. The importance of a healthy planet is absolute and therefore all other challenges cannot be addressed unless we have access to clean air, clean water and a habitable environment. Yet despite our need for a healthy planet, people are deprived of this basic right locally, nationally, and globally. Minorities in Baltimore City are poisoned by lead paint. Families in coastal cities such as Miami and Ocean City are losing their houses due to sea level rise. Countries such as the Bahamas are experiencing extreme hurricanes like Hurricane Dorian which increase in intensity every few years.

Due to climate change and the furtherance of environmental injustices, the protection for clean air, clean water and a healthy environment are needed now more than ever. The Maryland Environmental Rights Amendment enshrines for all Marylanders the right to a sustainable Earth, including our future generations. Imagine the example Maryland could set by recognizing the health of all of its people!

As a seventeen-year-old I can promise you the climate and ecological crises are on my mind and the minds of practically everyone my age. Many of us are asking ourselves whether we should be parents. How can we bring children into such a degraded and polluted world? Still we remain hopeful and the time to act is now. As people in power, what are you going to do to sustain the Earth that sustains all of our lives. What are you going to do to protect my children's future?

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Delegates for your time. I implore a favorable report for House Bill 517.