

BALTIMORE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

People ♦ Planet ♦ Prosperity

February 18, 2020

Delegate Kumar Barve
via email

We write this letter in support of HB517, the Maryland Constitutional Amendment to Environmental Health & Justice, which will give the people of Maryland the opportunity to vote on a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the right to a healthy environment.

The Baltimore Commission on Sustainability is a body appointed by the Mayor to oversee the creation and implementation of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan. Our members include representatives from community organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, public health and environmental justice interests, and private industry, along with one appointed elected member of the City Council. The 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan addresses a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals for the City, and it does so through an equity lens.

Given our mandate to advance sustainability and equity to benefit all residents of Baltimore, we have a strong interest in the success of HB517. The proposed constitutional amendment would improve equity by giving communities that suffer environmental harms a legal basis for demanding a quality environment. Baltimore has many such neighborhoods. The amendment would increase the likelihood of environmental justice and promote a mindset among elected officials to prevent pollution rather than just manage it, factoring this protection into all policy decisions. We urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Bakre



Miriam Avins
Co-chairs, Commission on Sustainability

Cc: Delegate Vaughn Stewart