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Health and Government Operations
Committee

Chair

Government Operations and
Health Facilities Subcommittee

House Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg
Before the House Appropriations Committee
In Support Of
House Bill 1310

**Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency –
Investment in Low-Income Communities**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

Impoverished communities suffer disproportionately from pollution.¹ A primary reason for this is that “[c]ommunities of color and those with low education and high poverty and unemployment” may be exposed to “[a] pervasive air pollutant, the fine particulate matter known as PM2.5”.²

With the focus on developing the next generation of clean energy projects apparent at all levels of government, we must acknowledge the harm that past energy projects have caused low-income and minority communities and remedy that wrong.

House Bill 1310 would require the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to develop policies and recommendations to ensure high priority funding for clean energy and energy efficiency programs and investments in the State to benefit “low-income communities,” which are defined in the bill. The Commission must report to the General Assembly and the Governor by December 31, 2021 and every subsequent year.

HB1310 requires the Commission to consult with various state and local agencies and representatives of low-income communities, clean energy industries, environmental advocates,

¹ Ohio State University. "Low-income, black neighborhoods still hit hard by air pollution." ScienceDaily. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/08/190810094052.htm. Accessed March 9, 2021.

² Katz, Cheryl. "People in Poor Neighborhoods Breathe More Hazardous Particles." Scientific American. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/people-poor-neighborhoods-breathe-more-hazardous-particles/> Accessed March 9, 2021.

and the general public. Ensuring that all of these stakeholders are in the room where the decisions and recommendations are made will foster equity in future clean energy programs and projects.

The priority funding process would apply in each fiscal year starting in 2023. However, I am drafting an amendment that would give effect to the policy in HB 1310 for the FY 2022 budget.

HB1310 is one mechanism to right a historic wrong, and if enacted, will provide meaningful solutions to communities across Maryland.

I urge the Committee to act favorably on House Bill 1310.

March 11, 2021