



TESTIMONY FOR SB0674
ENVIRONMENT – COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES - REFORM

Bill Sponsor: Senator Elfreth

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0674 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

The Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities was established in 2001. The Commission analyzes and reviews what impact State laws, regulations, and policy have on the equitable treatment and protection of communities threatened by development or environmental pollution, and determines what areas in the State need immediate attention. Moreover, the Commission assesses the adequacy of statutes to ensure environmental justice, and develops criteria to pinpoint which communities need sustaining.

However, since its inception, although the Commission has come up with recommendations, they don't seem to go anywhere. They are presented to the Governor, and put in a report, and there they die. This bill does several things. It changes the composition of the Commission, by adding members appointed by the Senate President and Speaker of the House. It also requires that the makeup of the Commission represent the racial, gender, ethnic and geographical diversity of the state. But, most importantly, it requires that any recommendations made by the Commission be presented to the General Assembly, rather than just presenting to the Governor and being published in a report.

We think this bill will ensure that the Commission's recommendations see the light of day and have a chance of being implemented.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.