



Favorable: HB82/SB151
Constitutional Amendment: Environmental Rights
January 18, 2021

Dear Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of a coalition of organizations and supporters across Maryland, we are writing to you today to urge you to support passing HB82/SB151 Maryland Constitutional Amendment for Environmental Rights.

In 1973, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Maryland Environmental Policy Act which recognized that “each person has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment.” State agencies were directed to implement this right but few developed the mandated rules to enforce it. As a result, this right has largely been ignored. Despite some subsequent bright spots in our laws, the lack of enforcement of this right contributes to the decline of our state’s environmental and public health.

In addition, environmental inequities continue. Environmental pollution and degradation are often concentrated in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods across Maryland. Such clustering has led to disproportionate health disparities, including increased rates of asthma hospitalization, heart disease, and cancer. These inequities demand that we protect the right for all to a healthful environment in our state constitution. Requiring the state to protect Maryland’s natural resources and our right to live in a healthful environment resets the priority of the government to put the health of the public first.

Supporting and voting yes for the Amendment will give the right to live in a healthful environment to everyone - especially the children and future generations. The Amendment would ensure that the right to a healthful environment would be enforceable, that all levels of government would be mandated to protect it, and that public and environmental health would remain a top priority regardless of administrative and political changes in leadership. It will

also create a compelling legal impetus to pass additional environmental legislation that will protect our environment, economy, and public health.

We ask that you support and vote for HB82/SB151 - the Maryland Constitutional Amendment for Environmental Human Rights. Our youth and future generations are counting on you!

Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Assateague Coastal Trust
Audobon Maryland-DC
BALTIMORE Blue+Green+Just
Be the Change Bmore
Black by Nature
Blue Water Baltimore
Catonsville Indivisibles
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, Environmental Justice Ministry
Center for Progressive Reform
Central Maryland Beekeepers Association
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Clean Air Prince George's
Clean Water Action
Climate Law & Policy Project
Creation Care Action & Advocacy, Baltimore-Washington Conference of UMC
Echotopia LLC
Frederick Friends Meeting
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
GreenGrace (Maryland Episcopal Environmental Partners)
Green Muslims
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA)
Ji'Aire's Workgroup
Laurel for the Patuxent
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Legislative Coalition
MLC Climate Justice Wing
Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Maryland Presbyterian Church
Maryland United for Peace and Justice
Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Mount Olive United Methodist Church, Randallstown
Multifaith Alliance of Climate Stewards
National Aquarium
Native by Design, LLC
Progressive Maryland
Rachel Carson Council
Safe Skies Maryland
St Vincent de Paul Church, Green Team
Seneca Creek Watershed Partners
ShoreRivers
Sierra Club, Greater Baltimore Group
Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter
Sunrise Movement Baltimore
Sunrise Movement Howard County
Takoma Park Mobilization, Environment Committee
The Climate Mobilization, Montgomery County Chapter
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Wicomico Environmental Trust
WISE