

TESTIMONY FOR HB82  
Constitutional Amendment: Environmental Rights  
Favorable  
Monica Brooks  
January 18, 2021

Good Afternoon. My name is Monica Brooks I am a resident of the Eastern shore of Maryland and I'm requesting a favorable response to HB82 thereby making environmental rights as important as other civil rights. Clean air, water and toxin free land should be a given.

My fondest childhood memories are summers with my grandparents who owned a large farm.. We'd spend hours running freely through the woods, eating fruit from the trees and drinking water from the creeks. It was a change of scenery for someone who lived in the city. But it was wonderful. So when I started my family on the shore, I thought the wide open spaces, abundance of trees and farms would provide them the same experience. However I quickly discovered a difference. Many adults and children with respiratory diseases like asthma and bronchitis. Wells that were contaminated, air filled with particulate matter and land with excess phosphorus.

Are you aware that the Eastern shore has the highest respiratory rates in the whole state of Maryland. How can this be? Much of our fight here is against big agriculture. Protections of our land, air and water are being overshadowed by the pursuit of profit and greed by big corporations.

How do I know this? My fellow citizens and I had to fight to protect the Paleo channel- the source of water for the City of Salisbury and county well owners like myself. Our aquifer was under threat by a contractor who received approval to place 13 Mega sized poultry houses on top of the aquifer. The complaints by hundreds of citizens on the local and state level were dismissed. Ordinary citizens banded together over a 2 year period until we successfully halted this project. This did not come at without cost, many of our citizens were, persecuted, threatened, assaulted, and some lost their jobs. If we had this amendment, citizens would have not had the necessary protections to prevent those atrocities.

As a mother and a grandmother, I pray that you would support this amendment letting all Marylanders know that life and good health are more valuable than profit and greed.

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