

Maryland-Delaware Solid Waste Association
a chapter of the



TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Arthur Ellis

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: February 24, 2022

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 818 – *Environment – Permit Applications – Environmental Justice Screening*

The Maryland Delaware Solid Waste Association (MDSWA), a chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association, is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in the State of Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. MDSWA and its members **oppose** Senate Bill 818.

Senate Bill 818 requires that anyone applying for a permit issued under the Environmental Article must include and “EJ Score” in its application. As proposed in the bill, and EJ Score is determined through an EJScreen mapping tool using the address for the permit application. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is to conduct an analysis of the EJScreen information in determining whether to issue a permit.

Maryland has notably taken many important steps to address environmental justice, including strengthening the membership and charge of the Environmental Justice Commission, which reviews and recommends policies to address environmental justice challenges in the State. MDSWA has been very supportive of those efforts and believes they will move the State forward in effectively addressing environmental justice challenges. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 818, proposes a one-size fits all approach to EJ analysis applied to all permits issued by MDE. MDE issues necessary permits for water, air, waste, and other infrastructure across the State that are required, regardless, for the health and safety of communities, including those that have faced environmental justice challenges. Even if the use of a mapping tool was relevant in certain circumstances, the language of Senate Bill 818 is too ambiguous to evaluate whether the proper and relevant metrics will be appropriately collected and evaluated. The State will be more effective in addressing environmental justice concerns through programmatic specific initiatives, such as those that come before the Environmental Justice Commission, than through the adoption of a mapping tool that may fail to produce information relevant to the permit applications for which it is being utilized. An unfavorable is requested.

For more information call:

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