



Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: HB880 - Environment-Impact of Actions on Climate, Labor and Environmental Justice
Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 2, 2022

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony in strong support of HB880. The MLC Climate Justice Wing is a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and grassstops groups advocating for climate and climate justice legislation.

We strongly support this legislation because it requires state agencies in their decision-making processes to make meaningful assessments of a proposed action's potential climate impact and effect on underserved and overburdened communities, environmental justice communities, and workers and jobs in Maryland.

Maryland's public agencies currently do not systematically assess how their decisions may contribute to environmental injustice, climate change, and worker or labor impacts and have historically taken actions that have contributed to public health disparities for BIPOC, low-income, and limited English proficient communities. These communities are disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards that include exposure to polluted air, waterways, and landscapes. The hazards ripple through the community creating disparities in health, wealth, and even life expectancy. Some of these hazards Marylanders face are well-researched and documented, including:

- Low-income communities of color in Maryland are [more likely](#) to live in close proximity to facilities that release toxic chemicals.
- Leaking underground storage tanks are [more prevalent](#) in low-income communities of color.
- Low-income Black communities in Maryland face [greater cancer risks and exposure to air toxics](#), primarily due to highway pollution and other mobile sources of air pollution (i.e. airplanes, trains, lawnmowers, construction vehicles, and farm machinery). These risks decrease as the proportion of white people in each census tract increases.
- Black people in Maryland are [more likely](#) to live in close proximity to facilities that release toxic chemicals.
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- Low-income Black communities in Maryland face [greater cancer risks and exposure to air toxics](#), primarily due to highway pollution and other mobile sources of air pollution (i.e. airplanes, trains, lawnmowers, construction vehicles, and farm machinery). These risks decrease as the proportion of white people in each census tract increases.

- Black people in Maryland are [more likely](#) to die from heart disease, cancer, and stroke. Black Marylanders are also [1.1 times more likely](#) to suffer from asthma, and 2.3 times more likely to die from asthma, compared to white people.

The Maryland Climate Equity Act creates a quantifiable way to identify and protect these communities, engage in meaningful communication, and prioritize these communities for investment. Before taking an action, each unit of government must engage in public outreach, and assess whether and to what extent the action may negatively affect the climate based on the scientific evidence recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It also requires payment of prevailing wage for each trade as well as health and retirement benefits and other beneficial programs. They must assess the impact of a project on an overburdened community, including deterioration of its public health, pollution effects, and impact on the economic well being of the community.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote favorably for HB880.

MLC Climate Justice Wing:

Assateague Coastal Trust
 Maryland Legislative Coalition
 MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
 Chesapeake Climate Action Network
 WISE
 Frack Free Frostburg
 Mountain Maryland Movement

Howard County Indivisible
 Howard County Sierra Club
 Columbia Association Climate change and sustainability advisory committee
 HoCo Climate Action
 CHEER
 Climate XChange - Maryland
 Mid-Atlantic Field Representative/
 National Parks Conservation Association
 350 Montgomery County
 Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
 The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County
 Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
 Montgomery Countryside Alliance
 Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
 Audubon Naturalist Society
 Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
 Environmental Justice Ministry
 Coalition For Smarter Growth
 DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
 MCPS Clean Energy Campaign
 MoCo DCC

Potomac Conservancy
 Casa de Maryland
 Nuclear Information & Resource Service
 Clean Air Prince Georges
 Laurel Resist
 Greenbelt Climate Action Network
 Maryland League of Conservation Voters
 Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
 Concerned Citizens Against Industrial Cafos
 Wicomico NAACP
 Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
 Chispa MD
 Climate Law & Policy Project
 Maryland Poor Peoples Campaign
 Labor for Sustainability
 The Nature Conservancy
 Clean Air Prince Georges
 350 Baltimore
 Maryland Environmental Health Network
 Climate Stewards of Greater Annapolis
 Talbot Rising
 Adat Shalom Climate Action
 Chesapeake Earth Holders
 Climate Parents of Prince Georges
 Echotopia
 Maryland NAACP State Conference, Environmental Justice Committee

