



Committee: Environment & Transportation
Testimony on: HB798 - Community Healthy Air Act
Organization: MLC Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Diana Younts, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable With Amendment
Hearing Date: February 25, 2022

Dear M. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB798. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB798 which simply requires an air quality sampling and monitoring protocol near large concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) to assess public health risks.

Thousands of industrial chicken houses on Maryland's Eastern Shore emit harmful air pollutants – including ammonia, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds and endotoxins. But no one monitors these direct air emissions, so we cannot properly address the risk faced by the neighboring communities.

Atmospheric ammonia does not travel far, so ammonia deposition concentrates in the neighboring communities. Low-income communities and communities of color are affected disproportionately by air pollution from the Eastern Shore industrial chicken farms:

- Somerset County, which has a high density of industrial chicken houses, is 43% African American and has the lowest average household income of any county in Maryland. It also has some of the poorest health outcomes in the State, including some of the highest cancer rates, along with many other Eastern Shore counties according to the Maryland Cancer Registry.
- Many of the counties with the greatest numbers of large chicken operations, such as Wicomico County, also have some of the highest rates of emergency department visits due to asthma.
- These same counties have some of the highest rates of lung disease, heart disease, and diabetes in the state.

Just as Maryland monitors air emissions from many different pollution sources across the

state, we should monitor air emissions on the Eastern Shore from the poultry industry. For these reasons we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

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
Clean Water Action
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 People's Campaign
Labor Network 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