

**February 21, 2022**

**HB0596 - the Maryland Constitutional Amendment for Environmental Rights**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

**Submitter: Lee McNair, Co-Leader, Unitarian Universalist, Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry (CLEJM), a member organization of the Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing and Climate Partners.**

**CLEJM supports HB596 and asks for a FAVORABLE vote in committee.**

**In 1973 Maryland passed the Environmental Policy Act which proclaimed: *each persons the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment.* Since that time Maryland has passed laws, written regulations, promoted policies intended to preserve and protect a healthy environment.**

- **Since that time our environment has steadily become more unhealthy, more degraded and especially so in our low-income communities and neighborhoods inhabited by mostly people of color.**
- **Since that time, Maryland cities have experienced flooding and urban heat island effects, plus coastal flooding, loss of farmland, degradation of fishing areas, and more.**

- **Since 1973, climate devastation and global warming have adversely impacted, not only Maryland, but the entire planet.**

**It should be clear to all of us that we need a much stronger foundation upon which to stand in order to protect our citizens and our total environment.**

**That is exactly what the Environmental Human Rights Amendment will give us. Better still, this gives the citizens of Maryland a voice in their own future through the right of choice since any constitutional amendment must be voted on by the people.**

**Marylanders are concerned about our environmental predicament with great reason. HB596 will be assurance to our residents that the State of Maryland understands their concern and wants to hear their voice in our approach to dealing with the climate crisis.**

**For numerous reasons the Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry supports HB596 and requests a FAVORABLE decision in committee. Thank you.**