

WANIKA B. FISHER, ESQ.
Legislative District 47B
Prince George's County

Assistant Majority Leader

Judiciary Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 414
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3340 · 301-858-3340
800-492-7122 Ext. 3340
Wanika.Fisher@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 23, 2022

Honorable Chairman, Delegate Kumar P. Barve
Vice Chair, Dana Stein
Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
Re: HB- 596 - Constitutional Amendment - Environmental Rights

I am pleased to reintroduce HB596. The purpose of this bill is to establish rights articulated in the Maryland Environmental Policy Act (Chapter 702, Acts of 1973) in an amendment to the State's Constitution. The proposed amendment grants each person the inalienable right to a healthy environment, and awards the state as trustee of its natural and historical resources for current and future generations. I think it is important to formally recognize environmental rights as a civil right in our constitution; as environmental injustice causes our most vulnerable groups considerable trepidation. Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately subjected to environmental pollution. The State of Maryland will benefit greatly from this bill as it increases equity in decision-making and enables communities impacted by environmental injustice to seek court intervention.

This measure further incentivizes decisive and thoughtful development in a way that protects resources communities depend on. Extended studies indicate amendments of this genre can be used as a tool by local governments to stimulate favorable development within their boundaries. Marylanders have the right to continue this conversation on the ballot. It is our responsibility as elected representatives to provide residents with the opportunity to do so. Please join me in protecting our communities and please give a **favorable** report on House Bill 596.

Sincerely,

Wanika B. Fisher

Wanika B. Fisher Esq.

Maryland State Delegate – District 47B