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Suburban Orthodox Congregation

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Baltimore District

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 133 – Environment – Coal Tar Sealant Products – Prohibitions (Safer Sealant Act of 2022)

Environment and Transportation Committee

January 19, 2022

SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 133 (HB133) would prohibit the sale or manufacture of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) coal tar sealant products. Additionally, it would prohibit the use of these products from being applied to a driveway or parking area and would instruct the Department of the Environment to adopt standards for the use of low-PAH coal tar sealant products.

Written Comments: Long term exposure to coal tar sealants has been linked to cancer since as far back as 1795. Coal tar sealants contain high levels of PAHs, and when humans come into contact with them, they bind to DNA. This has shown to lead to cancer, mutations, birth defects, death in fish, wildlife, and invertebrates. The Environmental Protection Agency has classified seven PAHs as probable human carcinogens, and 16 PAHs as Priority Pollutants. Simply put, no one should be coming into contact with these toxic substances.

When coal tar sealants dry and wear off the surface they have been applied to, they become highly fine dust particles. Not only is this dust breathed in by humans, but it is also tracked indoors settling on carpets where infants may be playing. Furthermore, it is susceptible to becoming run off, posing significant environmental and health threats to marine life and drinking water. It is clear that coal tar sealant products are harmful and it is why they have already been banned in several Maryland counties.

The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* teaches us to repair the world in which we live in. Jewish law clearly states that we are not to destroy the public domain. If passed, this bill would immediately put a stop to the significant damage that has been caused against both the environment and people.

The Baltimore Jewish Council and The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore are committed to repairing our world. We represent The Pearlstone Center in Reisterstown, MD, a conference center and farm that employs and teaches sustainable practices. We encourage this committee to join us in our mission to create Maryland that is healthier for everyone. With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB133.

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The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

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BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL
5750 Park Heights Avenue, Suite 329 • Baltimore, Maryland 21215
410-542-4850 • fax 410-542-4834 • baltjc.org
Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated

