



City of
Salisbury
Jacob R. Day, Mayor

23 February 2022

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB 596 – Constitutional Amendment – Environmental Rights

Position: Favorable

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

As you consider the merits of **HB 596**, I ask that you support this vital legislation and vote to give **HB 596** a **Favorable** Committee report.

The City of Salisbury supports a Constitutional Amendment for Environmental Rights. This amendment would prioritize statewide climate action by protecting Marylanders' individual and collective rights to a healthful environment. This bill is essential as it establishes a right to a healthful environment while helping to preserve our pristine environment and natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

This Constitutional Amendment for Environmental Rights would enable communities, individuals, and governments to safeguard public health and safety while also helping to fill in the gaps to provide additional protections where current statutes and regulations may fall short. All Marylanders would benefit from the recognition of a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful and sustainable environment; we must recognize this right by enshrining it as an amendment to the Maryland State Constitution.

As the Capital of the Eastern Shore, residents of our city have first-hand experience in contending with the effects of climate change. Whether faced with soil erosion in our tidal areas or the heavy flooding that has become synonymous with major storms, although we remain versatile, we recognize that now is the time to take meaningful action as we respond to environmental hazards that threaten the health of our Eastern Shore. Here in Salisbury, we are on the frontlines of the battle against climate change as we continue to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable practices through the transformative work of our Green Team, whose members work to develop projects and policies that foster an atmosphere of social and environmental responsibility across Salisbury and the Lower Eastern Shore. HB 596 will allow Maryland to stand as a leader at the vanguard of climate action as we recognize our presumed natural right to a healthful environment as a constitutional right, protected under the law for the benefit of both our individual and collective wellbeing.

An Environmental Rights Constitutional Amendment would effectuate much-needed climate action that will protect the environmental rights of all Marylanders. I ask for your **support** of **HB 596** as we work to advance environmental human rights.

Respectfully,

Jacob R. Day
Mayor