

# MARYLAND COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

March 4, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Chair, Environment and Transportation  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Paul Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, &  
Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William Smith  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT HB 596/SB 783: Constitutional Amendment - Environmental Rights

The Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC) is committed to doing our part to ensure that environmental laws and programs protect the environment as well as the health and well-being of all Marylanders. CEJSC has reviewed HB 82/SB 151 and provides this letter of information. This bill proposes an amendment to the Maryland Constitution to establish that every person has an inalienable right to a healthful environment and would declare the State's natural resources as the common property of every person, recognizing the State as the trustee of those resources.

CEJSC is charged with examining EJ issues and sustainable community opportunities that may be associated with public health, safety, economy, government, or other issues relating to EJ and sustainable communities. All Maryland residents deserve the right to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment. House Bill 82/Senate Bill 151 would provide a legislative tool to ensure the protection of a community's health and environment. The legislative support provided by this amendment would be effective in providing basic human environmental rights protection in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor these issues. Please feel free to contact me at 443-984-2460 or by e-mail at [Camille.Burke@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Camille.Burke@baltimorecity.gov).

Sincerely,



Camille Burke, Chair of the CEJSC

cc: The Honorable Wanika Fisher, House of Delegates of Maryland  
Ben Grumbles, Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment