



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Testimony on: HB0880 – Environment - Impact of Actions on Climate, Labor and Environmental Justice

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 2, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Regina Boyce

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as several nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0880 because it will bring equity to underserved Maryland communities that are currently overburdened by environmental hazards that hurt public health and negatively impact the economic well-being of the community.

Maryland's public agencies currently do not systematically assess how their decisions may contribute to environmental injustice, climate change, and worker or labor impacts, and have historically taken actions that have contributed to public health disparities for BIPOC, low-income, and limited English proficient communities. These communities are disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards that include exposure to polluted air, waterways, and landscapes. The hazards ripple through the community creating disparities in health, wealth, and even life expectancy. Some of the environmental hazards these communities face are well documented. For example:

- Low-income people of color, particularly Black people, in Maryland are [more likely](#) to live in close proximity to facilities that release toxic chemicals.
- Leaking underground storage tanks that can contaminate water are [more prevalent](#) in low-income communities of color.
- Low-income Black communities in Maryland face [greater cancer risks and exposure to air toxics](#), primarily due to highway pollution and other mobile sources of air pollution (i.e. airplanes, trains, lawnmowers, construction vehicles, and farm machinery). These risks decrease as the proportion of white people in each census tract increases.
- Black people in Maryland are [more likely](#) to die from heart disease, cancer, and stroke.
- Black Marylanders are [more likely](#) to suffer from asthma, and are 2.3 times more likely to die from asthma compared to white people.

HB0880 will address this important problem and restore equity by requiring state agencies in their decision-making processes to make meaningful assessments of a proposed action's potential climate impact and pollution effects on underserved and overburdened communities, environmental justice communities, and workers and jobs in Maryland. Agencies will need to engage in public outreach and assess whether and to what extent projects may negatively affect

the climate based on scientific evidence recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. HB0880 also requires payment of prevailing wage for each trade as well as health and retirement benefits and other beneficial programs, which will directly benefit workers.

Equal treatment and respect for all of our neighborhoods and communities are long overdue. HB0880 creates a quantifiable way to identify and protect already overburdened communities, engage in meaningful communication with them, and prioritize these communities for investment. DTMG therefore strongly supports HB0880 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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