



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Testimony on Maryland SENATE Bill SB0783: Constitutional Amendment - Environmental Rights

TO: Senator Smith, Chair, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Megan X, Progressive Maryland Environmental Justice Campaign, Takoma Park,
District 20
DATE: March 9th, 2022
POSITION: SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on SB0783. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with 9 chapters from Frederick to the Lower Shore and more than 100,000 members and supporters who live in nearly every legislative district in the state. In addition, there are dozens of affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our strong SUPPORT FOR this bill.

If you need a reason to support the Environmental Human Rights Bill, I'd like to share my story. I am a healthy 40-year-old woman. I don't smoke, I maintain a healthy weight, I love riding my bike, and I rarely eat red meat. In fact, at some points in my life I have followed vegan and vegetarian diets.

So imagine my surprise when I was recently diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer. It was a real shock. There weren't many warning signs until I collapsed on a sidewalk. The oncologist told me that cancers are becoming more common in people in their 30s and 40s. While some of it is early detection, my doctor also said that forever chemicals are a suspected cause, and this view is held by many in the medical community.

Forever chemicals, or PFAS, could or should have been removed from the market, but the initiatives to regulate them face challenges. Why? What is so radical about breathing clean air, drinking clean water, and living without fear of major climate disasters? It's true that I've always supported green causes, but my experience with cancer, likely caused by pollution, has reignited my view that things have got to change, and fast!

Respectfully,
Megan X, Member
Environmental Justice Campaign
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We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB0783**.