



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 743

DATE: February 23, 2023

SPONSOR: Senators Jackson and Lewis Young

ASSIGNED TO: Education, Energy and the Environment

CONTACT PERSON: Garrett Fitzgerald (garrett.fitzgerald@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Favorable (Department of Environmental Protection)

Climate, Labor, and Environmental Equity Act of 2023

This bill would require the Maryland Department of the Environment (“MDE”) to conduct an environmental justice (“EJ”) screen when considering the issuance of a permit. If MDE finds that a permit might have impacts on an overburdened or underserved community, MDE must conduct a climate and environmental equity evaluation in more depth. That evaluation must include consideration of:

- demographic, environmental, climate, and public health data that might illuminate community vulnerability;
- the applicant facility's potential contribution to greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions and compliance record;
- potential chemical and other stressors the community will be exposed to and their impacts;
- cumulative impacts of pollution in the affected community if the permit is approved; and,
- potential methods to mitigate potential adverse effects.

The bill also requires MDE to provide opportunities for residents to receive information about permits for projects that would be located near their homes, and updates annual reporting requirements imposed on State agencies.

This bill would help to ensure that MDE is operationalizing consideration of environmental justice in its issuance of permits and placing emphasis on encouraging projects in overburdened and underserved communities to take steps to mitigate project impacts. The bill would also require state agencies to identify opportunities to more fully integrate Maryland climate goals and consideration of pollution and public health into their respective plans and activities. This will lead to better projects and service to Maryland communities, and better community and environmental health outcomes throughout our state.

We respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 743.