

CITY OF BALTIMORE

Room 527, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Telephone: (410) 396-4822
Email: Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov



Councilwoman Phylcia R. L. Porter

District 10

MEMBER:

Public Safety and Government Operations
Education, Workforce, and Youth
Health, Environment, and Technology

Councilwoman Phylcia Porter's Letter of Support for Environmental Human Rights
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 6, 2023

Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am proud to be writing to urge your support for the passage of SJ0004 on its fiftieth anniversary. For the purpose of Reaffirming the principles, the Maryland Environmental Policy Act of 1973 (MEPA) not only maintains that every resident of this state has the fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment, but also provides all state agencies with certain freedoms and guidelines to “identify, develop, and adopt methods and procedures” to ensure this right is upheld for all Marylanders.

Established during an era significant for its environmental movements and crusaders, MEPA aimed to ensure that the state would hold environmental issues, planning and decision making with the same regard as it does economic and technological considerations. As our nation witnessed growing grassroots movements and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, policymakers were charged to acknowledge the importance of taking care of the planet, our home, and with a greater sense of urgency. The passing of the MEPA was Maryland's direct response to that.

While the act has some lofty goals, its meaningful and careful consideration as to how policymakers should implement guidelines for planning and problem-solving are still necessary. Not to mention how the act maintains education, communication, and awareness for the general public. Fifty years ago, MEPA set the precedent for what the state could and should strive toward.

However for the past fifty years, the State has largely ignored this mandate and failed to develop methods and procedures that would fully implement this right. Along with the rest of the world, Maryland is suffering from a rapidly increasing climate crisis and is in need of actionable environmental and climate change revitalization. More specifically, the communities in the City of Baltimore's Tenth District, which I serve, are disproportionately affected by cumulative impacts on the waterfronts of Curtis Bay, Brooklyn and Hawkins Point. Such close proximity to big factories and exposure to coal dust, airborne emissions and other pollutants have negatively affected the public health and welfare of South Baltimore residents for generations and remains an issue that is at the forefront of the Mayor of Baltimore's agenda and my office in particular. On the fiftieth anniversary of the Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) I speak for Baltimore City's Tenth District when I say, it is time to fix that.

I am asking for your support of the MEPA@50 Resolution and ask that the Maryland General Assembly reinvigorate MEPA by reaffirming its principles and use them to guide its deliberations. Marylanders deserve an administration that will seriously consider the harsh environmental impacts that residents

face daily by amplifying their voices and leading with a willingness to reorient itself toward environmental justice and climate solutions with a sense of urgency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phylicia Porter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name clearly legible and the last name partially obscured by a large flourish.

Councilwoman Phylicia Porter, MPH, MSL - District 10
Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov

anniversary