

Testimony in Support to of HJ0001/SJ0004 - A Resolution to Fully Implement the Maryland Environmental Policy Act of 1973 (MEPA) on its 50th anniversary

March 6, 2023

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of HJ0001/SJ0004. I urge you to vote favorably on HJ0001/SJ0004.

Hello, my name is Dave Arndt, a resident of Baltimore MD, an environmental and social justice advocate, a chemical engineer and a former director of products and services at NIH.

After fifty years, it is time to fully implement the Maryland Environmental Policy Act of 1973 (MEPA).

That is what SJ0004/HJ0001 urges. MEPA would create a consistent, unified foundation upon which our State's agencies would build their methods to ensure:

- environmental rights are duly considered,
- environmental laws are properly implemented,
- environmental justice is fully pursued, and
- the public is informed and engaged in a timely manner.

And yet, most of the State's agencies have failed to develop methods and procedures that would fully implement this right.

It is the fiftieth anniversary of the Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), and it is time to fix that.

The Maryland Environmental Policy Act of 1973 (MEPA) was ground-breaking and contained two essential elements:

- 1) The assertion that "each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment", and
- (2) That all State agencies "identify, develop, and adopt methods and procedures" to implement that right".

I just ask you to think about this:

Today, Curtis Bay residents have a 15-year shorter life span than other area of Baltimore, image what it would be if we had implemented MEPA.

Today, Baltimore's asthma rate is almost 3 times the nations average, image what it would be if we had implemented MEPA.

The Baltimore area spends approximately \$54M on health care cost attributed to the incineration of waste, image what it would be if we had implemented MEPA.

I could go on and on with these what ifs, but hopefully you understand the principle that every one should have access to a healthy environment.

Another view of this is that with proper environmental regulation would not have happened: The hwy to nowhere, warehouses with large diesel fleets operating in Black, brown and low-income neighborhoods large scale chicken farms dumping pollutants into waterways, multiple incinerators, almost daily sanitary spills by the city of Baltimore, the dominance of the auto versus a working public transportation system.

it is time to act and use Governor Moore's words and let's leave no one behind.

Thank you,

Dave Arndt