



TESTIMONY FOR SB0096

Environment - Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions

Bill Sponsor: Senator Jackson

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0096 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

We strongly support this legislation because it requires state agencies in their decision-making processes to make meaningful assessments of a proposed action's potential climate and health impact and effect on underserved and overburdened communities and environmental justice communities in Maryland. In the past, many decisions have been made that have adversely affected whole communities in Maryland. Decision-making should include the equity impact that the project would have on the communities that it affects as well as the overall cumulative impact of their decisions.

Maryland's public agencies currently do not systematically assess how their decisions may contribute to environmental injustice, climate change, and health 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.

This bill, if enacted, creates a quantifiable way to protect these communities, engage in meaningful communication, and prioritize these communities for investment.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.