

## Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

My name is Deidre Trass. I am a resident of District 23 in Bowie. I am submitting this testimony in **support** of SB96. I have served as my Homeowner's Association President for four years, I serve as the Chief of Staff to the President of my Chapter of NOBLE (National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives), I am a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, I serve as Vice President of the Prince George's County (MD) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated and I served on the City of Bowie Advisory Planning Board for over a decade. My family has a history of Asthma and COPD, so I understand the importance of a clean air.

I would like to share with you the environmental impacts we are already dealing with in the City of Bowie. The City of Bowie:

- Is in the 80-90% percentile for ozone contamination
- Has Air Toxics cancer risk of 70 - 90%
- Is 80-95% BIPOC
- 70-90% of residents suffer from heart disease and asthma
- Is located near 4 coal ash storage sites within 5 miles

We have enough contaminants in our immediate environment without adding more.

The **Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)** Permitting Authority Bill (SB 0096) is an important step in addressing environmental racism and injustice in Maryland. This bill would allow MDE to add conditions to permits, or even in some cases, to deny a permit for a facility that would add pollution to a community that is already suffering a pollution burden compared to over 75% of other Marylanders.

This legislation will:

- Require MDE to conduct an environmental justice evaluation for covered permits in "covered communities," meaning any census tract with an 'EJ Score' above 75, placing the community in the top quarter of the state for disparate pollution burdens, toxic exposures, and other social and health vulnerabilities.
- Authorize MDE to respond to its environmental justice evaluation by denying, OR imposing conditions on new or renewal permits that would increase pollution in covered communities.
- Authorize MDE to impose conditions on renewal permits even when they would not increase pollution to proactively address environmental justice concerns and prevent further harm.

- Require MDE to create a webpage of covered pending permits in covered communities and allows MDE to increase permit fees to cover the costs of implementation.

In the past, our state has made decisions about locating harmful, unhealthy, and dangerous facilities in locations that have overburdened many communities in the state, in particular it seems in communities of color like where I live in the City of Bowie. At present, our state still does not consider how industrial pollution impacts a community's health or our climate when permits are issued. Local communities, like mine, are not consulted about where these projects get sited, and in many cases, residents have been intentionally left out of this process.

This legislation takes the first step towards environmental justice and equality that is greatly needed. Bowie will no longer be the dumping grounds for the state of Maryland and we need this bill to pass in order to allow MDE to consider environmental justice impacts when issuing new and renewing permits to pollute.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB96 and approve this legislation.**

Sincerely  
Deidre R. Trass  
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