



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 5, 2024

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

**RE: Senate Bill 96 Environment- Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions - Letter of Support**

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) supports Senate Bill (SB) 96 - Environment Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions. SB 96 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to conduct a climate and environmental equity evaluation regarding the impact of issuing an approval for certain environmental permits; creates an avenue for health impact assessments; requires MDE to provide opportunities for residents of the State to opt in to text, phone, e-mail, or regular mail notifications regarding any facility with a pending or final permit approval in or adjacent to the resident's census tract; and alters certain reporting requirements for certain state agencies.

SB 96 is important legislation that aims to address the pollution-based inequalities that exist throughout the state utilizing a “Health in All Policies” analytical approach. As described by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Health in All Policies recognizes that health is created by a multitude of factors beyond healthcare and takes a collaborative approach to integrate health considerations into policymaking.<sup>1</sup> Census data has consistently demonstrated that low-income and immigrant communities tend to have higher exposure scores to environmental toxins that can exacerbate increased rates of poverty and chronic disease.<sup>2</sup>

SB 96 supports the Department’s mission of addressing social determinants of health, reducing health disparities, and advancing health equity among Maryland residents. A favorable vote is requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott".

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary  
Maryland Department of Health

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hiap/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> The Intersection of Immigrant and Environmental Health: A Scoping Review of Observational Population Exposure and Epidemiologic Studies; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9438924/>