



March 6, 2024

SUPPORT: HB 1375 - Environmental Justice - Identification of and Investment in Overburdened and Underserved Communities - Report

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV and the undersigned groups support HB 1375 - Identification of and Investment in Overburdened and Underserved Communities - Report - and we thank Delegate Rosenberg for introducing this legislation.

The 2022 Climate Solutions Now Act codified state definitions for overburdened and underserved communities and in the same year, the Joint Chairmen's Report included language asking the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to further investigate investments in overburdened and underserved communities based on the newly codified language. Maryland has a much more specific definition for overburdened and underserved communities than most states, which supports our ability to prioritize environmental justice initiatives and target state and federal investments.

In June 2023, MDE submitted a report to the General Assembly concluding:

1. The Maryland Department of Budget and Management, in consultation with the agencies, should track overall spending in overburdened and underserved communities, with the goal of spending at least 40% in overburdened and underserved communities; and
2. If not geographically or statutorily allocated, the listed agencies and programs should track the amount of spending going to overburdened and underserved communities, using the MDE Environmental Justice Screening Tool.

Then, in December 2023, MDE published its first report on "[State Spending on Greenhouse Gas Reduction in Maryland](#)," partly in response to language included in the 2022 Joint Chairmen's Report and partly to ensure that moving forward, it can adhere to any specific funding allocation requirements (e.g. through the Justice 40 initiative).

These initial reports have been helpful in providing agencies tools to help direct investments, and also in creating transparency in government spending. However, these reports are not annual requirements. HB 1375 would codify MDE's recommendation and require this good process to continue. It will also add a component of explaining where in the state overburdened and underserved communities are, which may change based on the results of new data (e.g. the census).

Maryland LCV and the undersigned groups urge a favorable report on HB 1375.

Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition

CASA

Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health



Center for Progressive Reform
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
Climate Law & Policy Project
Climate Reality Greater Maryland
Climate XChange Maryland
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry
Elders Climate Action Greater Maryland
Howard County Climate Action
Indivisible HoCoMD
Maryland United for Peace and Justice
Mountain Maryland Movement
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Rebuild Maryland Coalition
The Nature Conservancy Maryland/DC Chapter
Waterkeepers Chesapeake