



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB96

Environment - Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions

Senate - EEE

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

March 4th, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB96 -Environment - Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 120,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families in Maryland. We would like to thank Sen. Jackson and Sec. McIlwain for their leadership on this bill.

In particular, CASA is invested in seeing this bill pass, because our members populate some of the most polluted communities in the state. I want to highlight 2 communities where our members live that would trigger this EJ analysis.

Take Census Tract 8040.01 for example, where East Riverdale and Bladensburg meet in Prince George's County. This low-income immigrant community has an exposure score in the top 83% and overall score EJ score in the top 96%. The residents of this community are exposed to countless toxins and are in proximity to hazardous materials.

Lastly, census tract 2504.02 in Baltimore City, which encompasses parts of Brooklyn Park and is adjacent to Cherry Hill, has a total EJ score in the 99.6% and a matching overburdened environmental subscore in the top 99%. The data from these 2 communities explicitly outlines how seriously overburdened some of our communities are. The effects of living in polluted communities can range from cancer, asthma, low birth weights in newborns, to daily discomfort.

People living in highly-polluted areas should not have to worry about more polluting facilities opening up in their communities. Therefore, the ability for a permit to be denied or altered based on the living history of pollution and who lives there is a critical next step to improving the quality of life for residents in Maryland's polluted communities. For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

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