

Testimony Supporting HB1406
House Economic Matters Committee
February 21, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of Baltimore City and a person of faith concerned about public health, I am writing to express my strong support of HB1406, which will provide important, targeted environmental health protections for the communities in Maryland most overburdened by pollution.

HB1406 fills important gaps in how Maryland considers applications for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) to ensure that polluting energy-generating facilities aren't increasingly concentrated in communities in Maryland already overburdened by pollution. For polluting energy-generating projects (excluding wind, solar, and geothermal, with Delegate Behler's clarifying sponsor amendments) proposed in and around the most polluted 25% of census tracts in Maryland (as determined by MDE's Maryland EJ Screen), HB1406 requires extra information from the permit applicant and requires the PSC to consider whether the project will increase the pollution burden on the surrounding community as part of their review process. If the project will cause or contribute to disproportionate public health impacts on already-overburdened communities, HB1406 says the PSC will deny the project or issue a conditional CPCN with provisions that will protect public health and provide benefits to the community.

I see the BRESCO incinerator smokestack from my bedroom window, and I know that just a couple of miles away the residents of Curtis Bay and other South Baltimore communities face much worse air quality than I do from the CSX terminal and other industrial sites in their neighborhoods. It is not sufficient to consider environmental and health impacts of each project individually; we must account for cumulative impacts that keep children home from school due to asthma, that cause elevated cancer and respiratory disease rates, and that reduce communities' quality and length of life.

As Maryland confronts an energy crisis, we can and must make sure we do not increase pollution on already-overburdened communities. HB1406 is a necessary and timely bill to protect the most polluted communities in Maryland from more pollution. Please pass it in 2025!

Thank you for your work!

Regards,
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