



**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB168**  
**Environmental Justice in Confined Aquatic Disposal Act**  
Senate - Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

January 28th, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman and members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB168 - Environmental Justice in Confined Aquatic Disposal Act**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 60,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families in Maryland. We would like to thank Senator Simonaire for bringing this bill. CASA urges a favorable report for 2 reasons: SB168 utilizes the Department of the Environment's critical data on overburdened populations; SB168 also aims to protect communities that are already overburdened from another contaminated site.

To illustrate the use of the overburdened percentile as determined by MDE, I will use the Curtis Bay community as an example. For the 21226 zip code, which has census tracts in both Baltimore City and Anne Arundel County, residents live in an area where census tracts rank in the top 99 percentile and even the 100 percentile census tract for burden. This zip code and these census tracts are where many active CASA members find themselves. The overburdened score measures health outcomes and exposure to pollution. Some key indicators that are built into the percentile include proximity to hazardous waste sites, proximity to water discharge sites, low-birth weight among newborns, proximity to brownfields, and proximity to emitting power plants.

SB168 operates on the idea that overburdened communities need to be remediated instead of potentially being sites for contaminated sediment, waste, and generally harmful sites and facilities. The bill specifies that its environmental justice provision is for CADs that store contaminated sediments. Usually, CADs store sediment from nearby harbors or areas that need to be dredged. Take Curtis Bay for example, it is completely surrounded by facilities that discharge into the Harbor, the Patapsco River, and Gwynn Falls. The watersheds mentioned were given D and F ratings in terms of water quality by Blue Water Baltimore in 2023<sup>1</sup>. If further dredging and the standard practice of utilizing CADs in close proximity were to occur, the likelihood of contaminated sediments is extremely high from wastewater treatment plants, stormwater run-off from the industrial area, and decades of environmental degradation especially from facilities like the CSX terminal and nearby landfills.

Dredging occurs for the convenience of commerce in Baltimore's Port, but digging up this toxic sediment and placing it on the coast adjacent to communities that already bear the brunt of countless water, air, and land pollutants cannot be standard practice. For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bluewaterbaltimore.org/2023reportcard/>