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House Bill 1484 – SUPPORT

Environmental Permits - Requirements for Public Participation and Impact and Burden Analyses

(Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration For Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)

House Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members, my name is Ruth Sliviak. I am a 10 year resident of Anne Arundel County, living on the waterfront of Rock Creek. I am an insurance broker by occupation and certainly understand risk. I am also a volunteer of the Anne Arundel Patapsco Environmental Coalition because my area of northern Anne Arundel County along the tidal Patapsco River has been struggling with polluters for decades. My husband and our family have enjoyed all the beautiful aspects of living on the water including seeing frequent fly overs from Bald Eagles and Osprey.

Unfortunately, our view and much more concerning our air quality is impacted by the Brandon Shores Power generation station and Wagner power-generation station which have recently been converted from coal to other fossil fuels.

We must “soft wash” our home, pier and all outside surfaces many times during the year or risk the black material ruining them or causing permanent staining. We have 7 grandchildren and when they are outside playing in the yard or touching any surfaces, we must wash their hands to remove the black sooty material.

I am not understanding why the state continues to refuse to implement effective air quality monitoring in our area or conduct a health study. I am worried that it is because it might uncover inconvenient truths. It is my understanding that one was installed several years ago and then removed and then residents were told that there wasn’t enough data to do any formal reporting. We have so many polluters in our area it is frightening! Just to name a few we have the enormous expanding MPA Cox Creek Dredge Material Containment facility, a petroleum/asphalt processing plant, a chemical plant, multiple toxic material dumps, the horribly polluting Curtis Bay Energy medical incinerator - which is the largest in the country, the CSX coal terminal, and even a radioactive Superfund site. We are located only two and a half miles directly across the Patapsco from Sparrows Point in which cleanup operations from the pollution from Bethlehem Steel have been ongoing for years. In addition to the smoke from the power plants, I also smell the disgusting

odors of sewage from the waste water treatment plant which has frequent spills, the plastic smell from the medica waste incinerator and the stench from the plant that process feces for fertilizer nearby. We have so many sources of air pollution that we can never escape them. To add insult to injury our soil is contaminated as is the tidal Patapsco and the sediment in it.

Our communities suffer from economic and home value burdens along with the health burdens from all these sources of pollution.

We can't measure how much the pollution around us has impacted on our ability to work because of illness, or the organizations which depend on the state and municipalities which have to cover the medical care and expenses from those who are not able to work. We have suffered environmental injustice for decades. The last thing we need is more polluters near our homes. We have no way of knowing of much impact these things have caused because no one has been forced to measure and assess. They most certainly should figure into decisions about permitting polluters and recovering costs from known polluters in ways that support overburdened communities.

We all recognize that we need industry in Maryland, but the burden shouldn't be on one community and not be on an area that is already so very overburdened. We need to reverse the negative impacts and not place more offenders in our area. If we had more effective monitoring that would largely be accomplished through automation as pollution sensing technology has improved and become much more economical. We need to know the impact on our health and the state needs to help us!

We shouldn't have to continue to pay for polluting industries with our health any longer. It's time for environmental justice in our industrial permitting, comprehensive compliance monitoring, analysis, and enforcement, and addressing the economic burdens on community health and the cumulative and comprehensive impact of pollution on overburdened communities and the other stakeholders who are indirectly impacted by pollution. A process is needed that that is more inclusive for impacted communities. Overburdened communities shouldn't be forced to deal with the challenges of the existing permitting process that is designed to work against them.

House Bill Senate Bill 1474 along with other synergistic bills proposed in this legislative session will create the necessary infrastructure to create a measured approach to balancing the burden of pollution on Maryland's most overburdened communities. I strongly support House Bill 1484 and its commitment to environmental justice for overburdened communities. This bill is a landmark for future bills that evaluate and regulate the permits for polluters based on quantitative cumulative measurement of pollution burdens to communities. Maryland can lead the way for environmental justice. It's especially important in these extraordinary times.

Sincerely,

Ruth Sliviak

Rock Creek

