



Testimony on: HB0517 Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Submitting: Dave Arndt, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 18, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

In 2019, Baltimore City Council unanimously adopted the Baltimore Clean Air Act, designed to force the cleanup or closure of two major waste incinerators in our city: the trash incinerator in Westport (our biggest air polluter), and the medical waste incinerator in Curtis Bay (largest in the nation, importing waste from 20 states and Canada). Unfortunately, a federal District Court judge struck down the city's law on the basis of preemption -- even though federal and state law make it clear that local governments DO have the power to have clean air laws as strict or stricter than the state and federal minimums.

In 2024, the Govans community of Baltimore attempted to stop a crematorium from going into a residential area. This area is overburdened and underserved. If MDE took cumulative impacts into account this crematorium would have never been permitted. If Baltimore's Clean Air act was in place; this crematorium would have never happened. Unfortunately, Govans now must suffer another environmental injustice.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) can and often does institute regulations that are stricter than the Federal regulations. There are many local communities that want to protect their residents from pollution beyond current MDE regulation.

HB0517 is a legislative solution to the Federal court decision that overrode local government controls on stricter pollution regulations. This bill is to clarify that the legislature, through past legislation, indeed intended to allow local governments to protect their air quality with local laws at least as strict as the state. To protect our communities and to codify current Maryland environmental laws, especially with the current Federal administration dismantling or not enforcing current EPA regulation, we need to act now.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support HB0517 and urge a FAVORABLE report in Committee.

350MoCo
Adat Shalom Climate Action

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
Chesapeake Earth Holders
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Climate Communications Coalition
Climate Parents of Prince George's
Climate Reality Greater Maryland
ClimateXChange
Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists
DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
Echotopia
Elders Climate Action Maryland
Fix Maryland Rail
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
HoCoClimateAction
Howard County Indivisible
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Maryland Energy Advocates
Maryland Third Act
Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund
Mobilize Frederick
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Mountain Maryland Movement
Nuclear Information & Resource Service
Progressive Maryland
Safe & Healthy Playing Fields
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland