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HB517

February 18, 2026

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 517- Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 517 - Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority.

HB 517 allows local government authorities to regulate polluting facilities by establishing and/or enforcing stricter ambient air quality standards than the State of Maryland. The passage of this bill would allow local governments in Maryland to take additional regulatory steps to protect public health, overburdened communities and the environment from pollution and to allow for each jurisdiction to determine what those additional steps may be.

The goals of HB 517 align well with Baltimore City's 2019 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan strategies to reduce emissions, support renewable energy adoption and advance clean air, including goals in our Greenhouse Gas, and Clean Air chapters to:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Strategy 3: Create new programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Action 2:** Commit to being a "Carbon Neutral City," meaning we would have a net zero impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Action 3:** Reduce short-term pollutants, developing an action plan to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants (such as the harmful chemicals found in some refrigerators and air conditioning units), which cause significantly greater warming than carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases

Clean Air, Strategy 1: Reduce emissions from industrial operations to reduce harm to people living nearby.

- *Action 1: Encourage state-of-the-art pollution controls on all “point source pollution” emitters and improve review of the effect of new permit applications for air pollution sources, particularly those in and near zip codes with high asthma hospitalization rates.*
- *Action 2: Work with federal, state, and regional agencies to reduce toxic air emissions from transportation, especially reducing pollution from freight vehicles.*

HB517 enables Baltimore City and local governments across the State of Maryland to achieve these goals by setting local emission standards. For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB517.