

February 18, 2026

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Bill: HB0517 Emissions Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste -Local Authority

Position: Favorable

Dear Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

I wholeheartedly support HB0517. I fully support the ability of counties and other subdivisions to adopt ordinances, rules and regulations setting emission standards or ambient air quality standards surpassing those set by the state. The state can be slow to set appropriate air standards, and slow to change. This will allow counties and other subdivisions to adopt more stringent standards and hopefully prod the state to action.

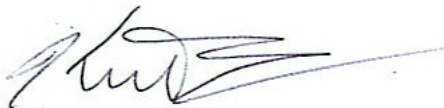
I am supportive of this bill also because to plans of WR Grace to open a pilot plastic "recycling" project on its campus in Columbia, Maryland. Plastic recycling as proposed by Grace is an oxymoron. It does not produce usable plastic at the end of the process, but does produce toxic waste and well as low-grade, very toxic fuel oils. If this project is approved, other chemical companies are interested in opening similar facilities in Maryland.

I live in a 55+ plus community less than three miles from Grace, and downwind. We are all of a certain age, which renders us vulnerable to organic volatile compounds, which will be emitted by Grace. And many of us have heart or lung conditions that VOCs will aggravate. There are eight senior citizen facilities within a 3-mile radius of Grace, and 20 schools. Residential houses are located immediately adjacent to the fence at Grace. This presents a threat to us, and expanded such facilities in Maryland would threaten all of us.

I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB0431.

Sincerely,

Kurt R. Schwarz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kurt R. Schwarz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Columbia, Maryland