

**February 16, 2026**

**HB517 Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management**

**- Local Authority**

**Environment and Transportation Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

Esteemed members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

I write today in support of HB517 Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority.

As written this legislation would bolster local authority to regulate air quality and emissions standards to mirror those that have been enshrined on a federal level. Since many air quality and emissions standards are now under assault, it is critical that the state and local jurisdictions move swiftly to ensure that public health and the environment are fully protected across the state at the county and local municipal level.

I have seen firsthand how local air quality monitoring efforts have an impact across St Mary's County, thanks to locally developed air quality monitoring network [BreatheWell St Mary's Health Initiative](#). This initiative, which provides real-time air quality data to the public, began during the pandemic thanks to the action and decisions of the St Mary's County Equity TaskForce and its representatives from the Health Department, Sheriff's Department and School system. The real-time dashboard shows residents the air quality from low-cost high quality air quality monitoring sensors placed at every local public school across the county and other key places of community interest. It has been used to alert residents to dangers and take corrective actions to protect human health.

While this bill does not go so far as to mandate that other jurisdictions take on this level of hyperlocal monitoring, it does empower local authorities to take seriously the air quality and emissions in their jurisdictions, which is an important and meaningful step.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

*Rosa E. P. Hance*

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