

HB517 Testimony - Andrew Hinz.pdf

Uploaded by: Andrew Hinz

Position: FAV

Testimony Supporting HB517
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 16, 2026

Andrew Hinz
1427 Park Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21217
ahinz61@outlook.com
443-617-4079

Position: SUPPORT

Members of the Committee,

As a lifelong, 65 years, Maryland resident and grandparent I urge you to pass HB517.

Thinking globally and acting locally continues to resonate because it is survival common sense.

With cancer rates among younger people rising alarmingly it is more important than ever to protect our air and water and food.

We cannot trust the Federal Government to be OUR local steward, regardless of which political party is in power.

State and federal laws already authorize local governments to set more protective local standards to address our local situations, but we need to make sure State laws will continue to work as intended AND our local governments MUST be able to protect us when Federal law allows predatory polluters to harm us when Maryland is slow to act.

HB0517_Emission_Standards_Ambient_Air_Quality_Stan

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0517
Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste
Management - Local Authority

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Terrasa

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0517 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Everyone deserves to live in a clean environment – breathe clean air, drink clean water, and not worry about getting sick from toxins around them. Over the past several decades, many laws, both federal and state, were passed to reign in polluters and try to make our air quality better. Now, we are going in the opposite direction, and many businesses are taking advantage. Federal regulations are being weakened so that polluters will have even more free reign.

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.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

HB517test_021826.pdf

Uploaded by: Charlie Cooper

Position: FAV

Charlie Cooper

2359 Nutmeg Terrace

Baltimore, MD 21209

Testimony in Support of HB 517 – Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

To the Environment and Transportation Committee

February 18, 2026

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Committee. I am writing as a resident of Baltimore City. I have been working with residents of South Baltimore for several years as they attempt to eliminate pollution from incineration of trash in their neighborhoods. I have seen bright, energetic, and determined residents, including young people, working to improve their communities.

House Bill 517 would clarify what I would interpret as the original intent of three sections of the Environment Article to allow local subdivisions and municipalities to enact strict environmental controls for the benefit of their residents. Resistance by polluters has created some question as to the original intent. Please issue a favorable report on HB 517 to allow local governments to protect the people they serve.

HB0517-ET_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Charlotte Fleckenstein

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

House Bill 517

*Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management -
Local Authority*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 18, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko & Charlotte Fleckenstein

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 517. The bill would clarify the intent of the General Assembly that counties have the power to regulate outdoor air quality and enact regulations that are as strict or stricter than the federal and state floors.

Local jurisdictions deserve the flexibility to tailor environmental standards to serve their communities. Counties recognize the importance of a healthy environment and have largely been leading the charge in securing better environmental outcomes. The General Assembly has empowered and continues to empower counties in taking this lead. Recently, though, some courts have thrown doubt on the General Assembly's intent regarding this grant of authority – specifically, in the area of air quality. This doubt has led to costly litigation and has hampered local governments' ability to push for a healthier environment.

HB 517 is necessary to clarify the intent of the General Assembly and solidify that counties have the authority to go above and beyond federal and state air quality standards. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 517.

Sponsor Testimony, HB 517.pdf

Uploaded by: Jen Terrasa

Position: FAV

JEN TERRASA
Legislative District 13
Howard County

Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Subcommittees

Election Law

Labor

Oversight Committee on Personnel



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 217
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3246
800-492-7122 Ext. 3246
Jen.Terrasa@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 18, 2026

To: The Honorable Marc A. Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Delegate Jen Terrasa
District 13, Howard County

Re: Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB 517 Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 517, a reintroduction of HB 1058 from 2025, which clarifies the Maryland General Assembly's intent that local governments can adopt their own air and waste ordinances as long as they are no less strict than federal and state minimums.

In Maryland, the Environment Code (Sections 2-104, 9-502, 9-503, and 9-716) empowers local governments to create their own air and waste regulations. However, multiple court decisions have raised questions about the clarity of the General Assembly's intent. Clarification is needed to ensure local regulations can be enacted without fear of costly litigation.

Local jurisdictions deserve the flexibility to tailor environmental standards to meet the needs of their communities. Counties understand the importance of a healthy environment and have often been at the forefront of achieving better environmental outcomes. Allowing local governments to tailor regulations promotes more effective solutions. HB 517 clarifies the General Assembly's intent and reinforces that counties have the authority to adopt stricter air quality standards beyond federal and state requirements. Local governments

are best positioned to address the unique needs of their communities, which can vary significantly across Maryland.

Concerns about conflicting regulations across jurisdictions fail to recognize the benefits of local autonomy in addressing specific environmental and waste management needs. Under the bill, the Maryland Department of the Environment will provide clear information on local rights and regulations via its website, ensuring consistency and minimizing confusion.

As we've seen federal environmental regulations altered or nullified in the past year, HB 517 helps ensure that local governments can step into the vacuum. This bill strikes a balance between local control and statewide oversight, fostering transparency and supporting communities.

I respectfully urge a favorable report for HB 517.

Testimony Supporting HB 517.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Robin Kulik

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in Support of HB 517
Submitted by: Jennifer Robin
Clarksville, Maryland Resident
Maryland State Legislature
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Dear Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing as a concerned resident of Clarksville, Maryland, to strongly urge you **to support and pass HB 517**, which clarifies and corrects language in Maryland law to affirm the authority of counties and municipalities to adopt air pollution and waste management standards that are more protective than federal and state minimums. I am **in favor of passing bill HB 517**.

Although both federal and state environmental laws have long authorized local governments to enact stronger protections—under the Clean Air Act since 1970 and under Maryland law since 1957—ambiguities in current statutory wording have led to legal challenges that put local clean air laws at risk. HB 517 resolves these inconsistencies to ensure that local jurisdictions can confidently fulfill their responsibility to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of their residents.

This authority has existed for more than 50 years without creating regulatory chaos or widespread conflicts among local laws. At a time when federal environmental protections face increasing uncertainty, it is essential that Maryland's local governments retain clear authority to respond to local conditions and protect the air quality and well-being of their communities. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill to safeguard our air, water, and communities for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Robin
Clarksville, Maryland Resident
Stop Grace Team

HB0517 Emissions Standards..pdf

Uploaded by: Kurt Schwarz

Position: FAV

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.

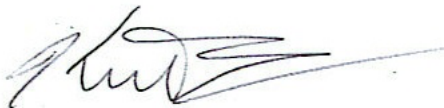
I am supportive of this bill also because to plans of WR Grace to open a pilot plastic "recycling" project on its campus in Columbia, Maryland. Plastic recycling as proposed by Grace is an oxymoron. It does not produce usable plastic at the end of the process, but does produce toxic waste and well as 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

HB0517_Emission Stds, Ambient Air Quality Stds, &

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



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

HB 517 Testimony 2-16-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Krausz

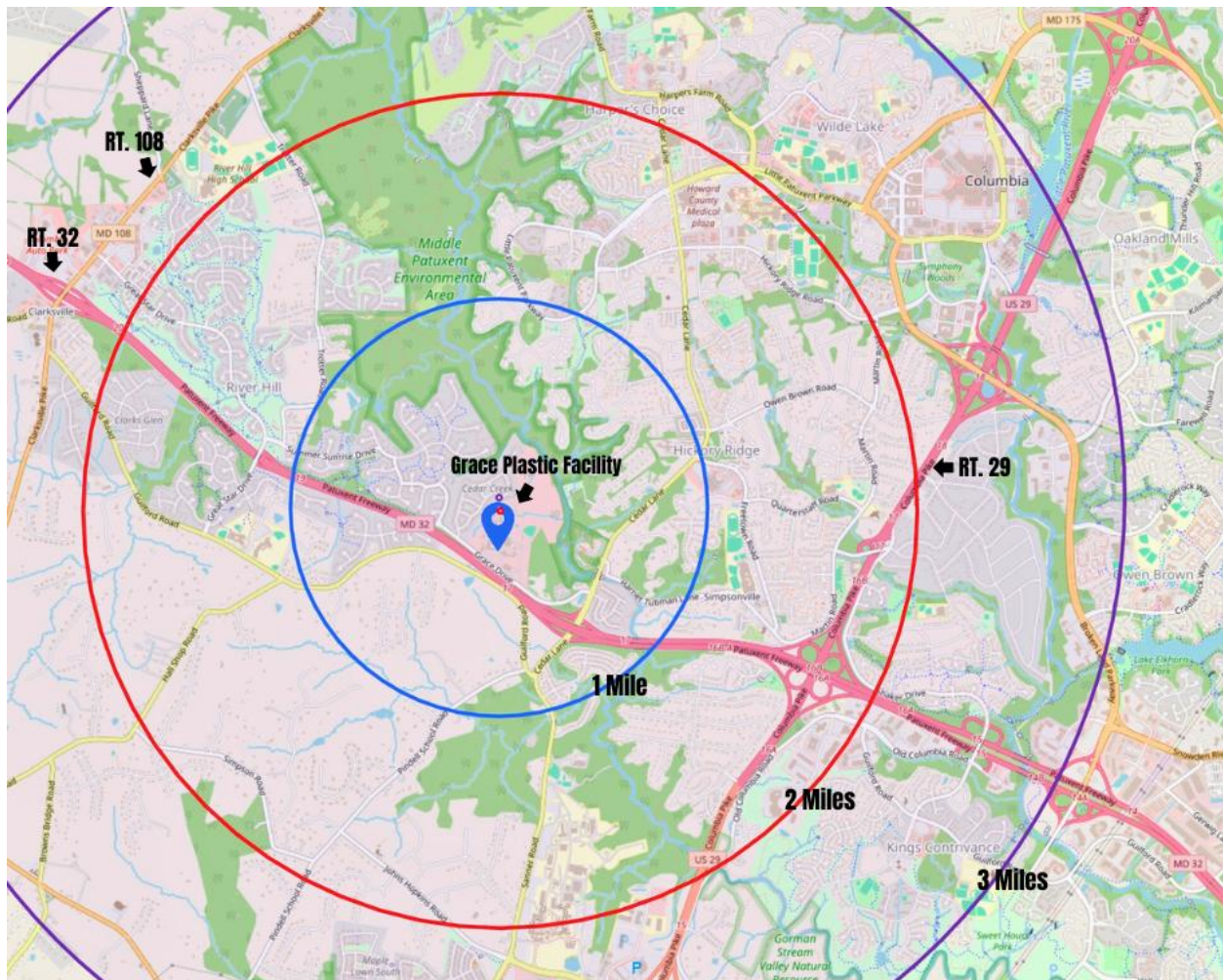
Position: FAV

Testimony of Lisa Krausz

In Support of HB 517 - The Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

February 16, 2026

My name is Lisa Krausz. I am a resident of River Hill Village in Clarksville, Maryland. Currently, I am serving as the co-facilitator of the Stop Grace Coalition (stopgraceplasticpermit.my.canva.site). Our group is working to protect Howard County's clean air from the polluting impacts of "chemical recycling" (or the process of heating plastics up to high temperatures - which is defined as incineration by the EPA). I am urging a favorable report from the Committee concerning HB 517 and here is why.



Right now, Howard County residents are facing a fight to stop chemical recycling from moving forward in their community. The Stop Grace Coalition has over 1500 petition signers opposing a soon-to-be-operational plastic pyrolysis pilot facility in their community. Please see the attached map which shows the location of the pilot project – which will be located less than a football field

away from homes in the Cedar Creek neighborhood, a truly diverse community with countless families and school children living there.

While the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has approved this project, and fought local residents in a permit challenge before a judge on January 16th of this year (the decision of which is still pending), it is clear that Howard County residents do not want this technology in their community. Unfortunately, residents lack adequate legal tools for mounting a stronger case against this facility.

HB 517 will provide counties with stronger tools to fight polluting projects in their communities and to protect the health of their residents as well as their environment. Specifically, HB 517 will clarify and correct language in current state law to empower Marylanders to create local air pollution and waste management laws for their county/municipal jurisdictions that are more protective than federal and state minimums.

While federal and state environmental laws already authorize this, these rights have been questioned in federal courts. This bill would make state law more clear so that counties and municipalities can fulfill their duties to safeguard public and environmental health.

Under the current Federal Administration, environmental regulations (that the state typically follows) are under significant attack. It's shocking how hard-won gains can be wiped out so quickly, so it is more important than ever that our local governments have the power to protect their residents when the state is slow to act.

Please support HB 517 and clarify the law so that Marylanders can get the protections we deserve.

HB0517_FAV_Emission Standards_ENT_LPP.org.pdf

Uploaded by: Liz Feighner

Position: FAV



Testimony on: [HB0517](#) – Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

Sponsor: Delegate Terrasa

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization: Less Plastic Please, Indivisible Howard County & HoCo Climate Action

Submitting: Liz Feighner

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 18, 2026

[Less Plastic Please](#) is a Howard County based grassroots organization representing more than 200 subscribers. We work closely with the [Zero Waste Team](#) of [Howard County Sierra Club](#) and are a [Beyond Plastics](#) Affiliate. Reducing the production of plastics and creating a zero-waste economy is one of our top concerns. [Indivisible Howard County](#) represents 1700+ members and is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). [HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. It is also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

Our organizations support **HB0517** which will clarify and correct language in current state law that will empower Marylanders to create local air pollution and waste management laws for their county/municipal jurisdictions that are more protective than federal and state minimums. Maryland residents need to be able to have more say in the quality of the air they breathe!

HB0517 is a legislative solution to the Federal court decision that overrode local government controls on stricter pollution regulations. A federal District Court judge struck down Baltimore's Clean Air Act 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.

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.

We urge a **favorable report for HB0517**.

Submitted by Liz Feighner

[Less Plastic Please](#)

[Indivisible Howard County](#)

[HoCo Climate Action](#)

HB 0517.pdf

Uploaded by: Martin Reisinger

Position: FAV

HB 0517

February 16, 2026

Maryland should take steps to ensure Federal environmental regulations do not nullify our local governments' legislation. Local entities should have the power to protect their residents in their jurisdiction when the state is slow to act.

Martin Reisinger
4064 Pleasant Valley Road
Oakland MD 21550

HB517_EnergyJusticeNetwork_Ewall_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike Ewall

Position: FAV



February 18, 2026

Comments before House Environment
& Transportation Committee

FAVORABLE

House Bill 517

**Emissions Standards, Ambient Air Quality
Standards, and Solid Waste Management
- Local Authority**

Mike Ewall, Esq.
Founder & Director
Energy Justice Network
215-436-9511
mike@energyjustice.net
www.EnergyJustice.net

Good afternoon. My name is Mike Ewall and I'm the founder and director of a national organization, Energy Justice Network. Energy Justice works at the local level with grassroots community groups in Maryland and the rest of the country to support efforts to promote zero waste, and to stop polluting and unnecessary energy and waste industry facilities.

Energy Justice Network strongly supports House Bill 517, which we call the Reaffirming Local Environmental Authority Act.

This bill simply clarifies what federal and state law already authorize, that local governments are allowed to have their own air and waste laws so long as they are no less strict than the federal and state minimums. Local governments know best what the needs are, which can vary throughout the state in different types of communities.

HB 517 is needed to clarify the intent of the General Assembly, which was established many years ago with language empowering local action in these areas. Unfortunately, some local governments have been tripped up by unclear wording in the state law, which lawyers have used to bring costly lawsuits and undermine local governments' efforts.

Since 12/31/1970, the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), at 42 U.S.C. § 7416, allows states ***and their political subdivisions*** to have stricter air pollution laws than the federal floor:

§ 7416. Retention of State authority

Except as otherwise provided in sections 119(c), (e), and (f) (as in effect before the date of the enactment of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977), 209, 211(c)(4), and 233 (preempting certain State regulation of moving sources) **nothing in this Act shall preclude or deny the right of any State or political subdivision thereof to adopt or enforce (1) any standard or limitation respecting emissions of air pollutants or (2) any requirement respecting control or abatement of air pollution**; except that if an emission standard or limitation is in effect under an applicable implementation plan or under section 111 or 112, such State or political subdivision may not adopt or enforce any emission standard or limitation which is less stringent than the standard or limitation under such plan or section.

Similarly, our federal solid waste law, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) adopted on 10/21/1976 does the same, at 42 U.S.C. § 6929, in a section titled “retention of State authority,” which states:

“[N]o State or political subdivision may impose any requirements less stringent than those authorized under this subtitle respecting the same matter as governed by such regulations... **Nothing in this title shall be construed to prohibit any State or political subdivision thereof from imposing any requirements, including those for site selection, which are more stringent than those imposed by such regulations....”**

Some federal courts have held that it’s really a state-by-state decision whether local government has this power. Maryland’s General Assembly has provided for local governments to have their own laws that are no less strict than the state or federal minimums. Maryland Environment Code §§ 2-104, 9-502, 9-503, and 9-716 already empower local rules and regulation on air and waste matters.

Some court decisions have called into question the General Assembly’s intent regarding the grant of authority to local government. Some local governments have even held themselves back from exercising their freedom to contract with waste facilities as they see fit, out of misguided fear that state waste planning requirements interfere with their right to contract with lawfully-operating, licensed waste facilities.

HB 517 clarifies the following:

- 1) That local governments can have their own clean air laws. This is already quite clear, but the law uses the word “section” where it should say “subsection,” which has enabled creative lawyers to argue that the part saying that local governments can *also* ask the state to set stronger air standards somehow limits local governments to *only* be able to ask the state for stronger standards, when the legislative intent is clear that it also authorizes local governments to act.
- 2) That local laws do not conflict with state law so long as they are no less strict than state law, and it’s technically possible to comply with both state and local law. This sets the standard for conflict preemption where it typically is in most states. It’s not a conflict if complying with both is simply inconvenient.
- 3) That the requirement for the Maryland Department of the Environment to approve local solid waste plans does not take away the freedom for a county or municipality to contract with lawful waste management companies, or to exert their rights to have clean air laws.
- 4) That the federal authorization for local government to have waste regulations no less strict than the federal standards is affirmed in state law, mirroring the language in the state air law that authorizes the same.

Finally, it ensures that the Maryland Department of the Environment provide this information on their website so that local governments are clear about their rights.

Will this lead to a mad rush to adopt local laws in a conflicting patchwork of regulations? Not at all. The authority for local air laws has existed at the state level since Md. Environment Code § 2-104 was adopted 69 years ago in 1957. The authority was backed up by the federal Clean Air Act in 1970 and, for solid waste regulation, by RCRA in 1976. In these 50-56 years, we have not seen this “what if?” scenario materialize.

This straw man argument is often raised by industry and sometimes by state environmental agencies, but has not been a real concern.

Will we face a waste crisis if counties start cracking down on waste disposal facilities? This is unlikely to be an issue. All but one municipal solid waste landfill in the state is county-owned, as is one of the two municipal solid waste incinerators in the state. Counties do not need to pass local laws to regulate their own facilities, but can just choose to meet higher standards. The rare cases where a local government feels the need to regulate a private waste facility are not likely to be done in a reckless manner, as the counties still have to have places for their waste to go, in compliance with their state-approved solid waste management plans.

Local governments are charged with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of their residents, which can be impacted by localized air pollution or waste management facilities.

Passing this law, by itself, would not impact any specific entities or increase any standards. It would take an act of a county or municipality to choose to adopt what they're already authorized to adopt, but this law would free them of ambiguity and threats of unfounded litigation.

We encourage the passage of House Bill 517 so that our communities can enact appropriate local rules and regulations without unnecessary fears of costly litigation.

HB0517-ET-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

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.

2026 HB 517 testimony Ateto.pdf

Uploaded by: Philip Ateto

Position: FAV

Dear Environment and Transportation Committee Members,

My name is Philip Ateto and I am a lifelong Marylander, currently residing in Annapolis, in Anne Arundel County. I am writing in support of HB0517 Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

I support this bill because it will clarify and correct language in current state law that will empower Marylanders to create local air pollution and waste management laws for their county/municipal jurisdictions that are more protective than federal and state minimums. While federal and state environmental laws already authorize this, these rights have been questioned in federal courts. This bill would make state law more clear so that counties and municipalities can fulfill their duties to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of their residents as they find necessary and appropriate.

This can help communities defend themselves against polluters, especially when the state and federal governments aren't being strong environmental enforcers, as they should be.

Especially with the repeal of the EPA authority to regulate carbon and other emissions, Maryland residents need to be able to have more say in the quality of the air we breathe!

The federal Clean Air Act has authorized local clean air laws since 1970, and Maryland state law has done so since 1957! Let's make sure that these rights are clear.

This authority has been on the books for over 50 years and has not resulted in chaos with tons of conflicting local laws everywhere.

Federal environmental regulations (that the state typically follows) are under attack, and our local governments should have the power to protect their residents when the state is slow to act.

For these reasons and for the future of our children, whom we claim to care so much about, I urge you to support this bill.

Copy of HB0517_Emission_Standards_Ambient_Air_Qual

Uploaded by: Rebecca Turner

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY FOR HB0517
Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste
Management - Local Authority

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Terrasa

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting:

Person Submitting: Rebecca M. Turner

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0517 on behalf of Rebecca M. Turner.

Everyone deserves to live in a clean environment – breathe clean air, drink clean water, and not worry about getting sick from toxins around them. Over the past several decades, many laws, both federal and state, were passed to reign in polluters and try to make our air quality better. Now, we are going in the opposite direction, and many businesses are taking advantage. Federal regulations are being weakened so that polluters will have even more free reign.

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.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Rebecca M. Turner

21 Walnut Hill Road

La Plata, MD 20646

Testimony in support of HB0517 - Environmental Loc

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

HB0517_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/18/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#0517 – FAVORABLE

Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0517, Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management - Local Authority

This bill will give local jurisdictions within Maryland more power locally in decisions that prior to the bill were dictated by the Maryland Department of the Environment. It will deal with air quality and water and sewerage governance as more of a local than a state-controlled dictate.

This bill will alter provisions of law relating to the authority of a political subdivision to adopt ordinances, rules, or regulations that set emission standards or ambient air quality standards under certain conditions; specifying that the requirement for the Department of the Environment to approve a county water and sewerage plan does not limit certain authority of the county; requiring the Department to publish certain information on its website by October 1, 2026; etc.

The General Assembly can use the data in the published reporting to draft legislation to address any issues uncovered during the process.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass HB0517.

Testimony in Support of HB 517.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Stubblefield

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of HB 517-Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards and Solid Waste Management

To the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Greetings

My name is Robert Alex Stubblefield and I am a poet, lay minister, theologian, and activist-organizer with a variety of groups such as the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition, Black United Front of Moco, Moco Liberation Collective, DSA and a variety of other organizations. Just as important, I am a lifelong Maryland resident and I am writing in support of HB517, Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards and Solid Waste Management. My reasons are explained below.

The first reason why I am supporting this bill is because we are and have been in a climate crisis for some time. We are in urgent need to ensure that we as Marylanders can have a clean environment so future generations can enjoy and thrive. Unfortunately, given the current federal administration gutting environmental protections at every level, it is vital that Maryland and its localities step up and empower Marylanders to create local air pollution and solid waste management laws for their counties/municipalities that are more protective than the federal and state minimums. This is important because the bare minimum is no longer going to cut it. We have been out of time for a while now. What this bill will do is that it will make state law more clear to ensure localities can fulfill their duty to safeguard not only the health of the environment, but also the safety and welfare of their residents as necessary and appropriate.

The second reason why I am supporting this bill is because it will empower Marylanders. Given the current laws and regulations on the books, the way they are written creates confusion and it has, unfortunately created the opposite affect in which local clean air laws are at risk. What this has also done is that it makes it harder for localities to meet their own climate goals and has allowed for goals to be pushed back and delayed. This is problematic because current laws do not empower Marylanders. This bill will allow Marylanders to have a say and not only demand stronger laws written in clean language, but will also help communities defend themselves from polluters. This is very important because of a unfortunate history of environmental racism and classism because historically marginalized communities such as black and brown communities are always to feel the brunt of pollution and other environmental harms. This bill will ensure that there are stronger laws on the books especially given the most recent leak in the Potomac which will require years of cleanup.

The third reason is because we have a duty to be good stewards of the earth. As a lay minister and theologian, we have an obligation to be good stewards of the earth. That means from an environmental standpoint to ensure that our air is clean, our water is clean and safe to drink and grow food and that waste is not poisoning our communities. Local governments can and must have the power to protect their residents when the state and federal are either slow to act or being hostile. We have that duty also as constituents to ensure that we have the say and power to fight for these laws but to also punish polluters be they private or governmental. This is a moral imperative and a necessary one.

In closing, I support this bill and we need it now more than ever.

Thank you

HB517 Emissions Standards Favorable RHance.pdf

Uploaded by: Rosa Hance

Position: FAV

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

Rosa E. P. Hance

rephancemd@gmail.com

240-808-4233

Great Mills, Maryland

HB517 The Emission Standards Local Authority Bill

Uploaded by: Sharon Boies

Position: FAV

February 16, 2026

HB517 – The Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, And Solid Waste Management -Local Authority Bill

Position -Favorable

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of HB517, the Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, And Solid Waste Management-Local Authority Bill.

Serious concerns have been raised regarding the environmental and health impacts of pyrolysis, particularly as it relates to plastic processing. While marketed as "chemical recycling," pyrolysis is an energy-intensive process that emits toxic pollutants such as dioxins, benzene, and heavy metals. These emissions often exceed the greenhouse gas output from making plastic from crude oil (1). Permitting pyrolysis facilities could undermine Maryland's climate goals during a period of record-breaking heat, environmental stress, and rollbacks of federal environmental regulations.

Of particular concern is the impact on our air quality and waterways. Pyrolysis generates toxic ash and wastewater that can contaminate groundwater and drinking water sources (2). In Howard County, a proposed pyrolysis project is sited adjacent to a residential neighborhood and a protected environmental area that buffers the Middle Patuxent River—a critical headwater source of drinking water.

Furthermore, NASA air pollution monitoring tools indicate that Howard County already has some of the most polluted air in Maryland (3). Adding intentional emissions of hazardous air pollutants is counterproductive to our climate goals and detrimental to public health.

It is imperative that local authorities be granted the authorization for more stringent oversight of waste management, local recycling programs, or business practices that may negatively impact air and water quality.

Authorization for infrastructure such as water and sewer permits should not preclude local oversight of air quality.

Additionally: Local Authorities should always have access to the following:

- TRI Reporting: Local Authorities should be authorized to request current Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) data, which should include all data regardless of thresholds, including dioxins and mercury which have lower reporting triggers. Reportable data should include the amounts

of chemicals released to air, water, or soil—including fugitive emissions from leaks and vents, and other air releases—and quantities managed through recycling, treatment or disposal.

- Results of all internal studies related to health, air, soil, or water quality.

Local Authorities must have the ability to determine the cumulative impacts of these emissions on human health. Furthermore, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Local Authorities must have clear authority to shut down projects that threaten public safety.

Maryland should allow local municipalities to strengthen their laws and review the zoning processes that allow experimental pyrolysis facilities to operate near neighborhoods and clean water sources.

I urge a favorable report on HB517. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sharon Boies
Protect Our Streams

RESOURCES-

(1) <https://www.propublica.org/article/delusion-advanced-chemical-plastic-recycling-pyrolysis#:~:text=Half%20of%20all%20U.S.%20states%20have%20eased,gases%20than%20making%20plastic%20from%20crude%20oil>

(2) <https://www.clf.org/blog/burning-waste-bad-idea/#:~:text=No%20Matter%20What%20You%20Call,plus%20heavy%20metals%20and%20dioxins>

(3) <https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-shares-first-images-from-us->

HB 571 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Tyler St Clare

Position: FAV

Climate change is occurring at a startling and accelerating pace, and so far, government action has been insufficient to counter it. Baltimore's Wheelabrator, in addition to causing millions of dollars worth of health problems for local residents, is also the city's largest polluter. Burning trash is a dirty, short-sighted and unsustainable approach to waste management - let's leave it in the past where it belongs and start implementing cradle-to-cradle solutions.

Warmly,
Tyler St Clare

HB0517_UNF_NWRA_Emmission Standards, Ambient Air Q

Uploaded by: Drew Vetter

Position: UNF

Collect
Recycle
Innovate



**National Waste
& Recycling Association**SM

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 18, 2026

House Bill 517 – *Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management – Local Authority*

POSITION: OPPOSE

The Maryland chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA-MD) is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in the State of Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. NWRA-MD and its members **oppose** House Bill 517.

House Bill 517 authorizes a local jurisdiction to adopt an ordinance, rule, or regulation to regulate emission standards, ambient air quality standards, or refuse disposal and solid waste management provided that the jurisdiction's actions are at least as stringent and do not conflict with the State standards. Providing the authority for local jurisdictions to adopt their own rules and regulations relative to emissions, ambient air quality standards, refuse disposal and other solid waste management programs could result in conflicting standards across jurisdictions, resulting in the disruption and degradation of efficient and effective refuse collection, processing, recycling, and disposal.

Our members are concerned about the possibility of having multiple standards being created across jurisdictions in Maryland. Many of our members and our facilities are serving customers from various counties. This could result in members having different compliance requirements as they serve customers from one jurisdiction to the next. Many of our members are small businesses and lack the resources to comply with a patchwork of regulations from one county to the next. One example is small family-owned waste-hauling companies, which often have contracts to serve customers in multiple jurisdictions. While these companies are diligent in ensuring compliance with State regulatory requirements for solid waste, it would be unreasonable for them to face differing standards from one jurisdiction to the next. Such dual systems can lead to confusion, costs, and risk for small businesses. For these reasons, we recommend an unfavorable report.

For more information:

Andrew G. Vetter

J. Steven Wise

Christine K. Krone

410-244-7000

Visit our website www.wasterecycling.org

HB 517_MAA_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Tim Smith

Position: UNF



Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 18, 2026

RE: HB 517 – UNFAVORABLE – Emission Standards, Ambient Air Quality Standards, and Solid Waste Management – Local Authority

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) represents approximately 110+ members, including 20 material producers, contractors, engineering firms, and associate members, supporting a 7,000-person workforce. MAA actively collaborates with regulatory agencies to advocate for the asphalt industry, ensuring fair regulations at both the state and federal levels. Additionally, we support adequate funding for Maryland’s multimodal transportation system.

House Bill 517 would allow counties or other local subdivision to set higher environmental thresholds than what the State requires, so long as it is “technically possible” for a regulated entity to comply with both the State and local standard.

MAA respectfully opposes this bill because allowing individual counties to adopt differing emission and air quality standards will result in a patchwork of conflicting requirements that complicate compliance, increase costs, and disrupt project delivery timelines. Not to mention, our industry is already subject to comprehensive state and federal environmental standards designed to ensure consistent air quality protections, while allowing us to operate efficiently. Our members often serve multiple jurisdictions. Under this bill, they could be held to different emission standards when supplying projects across county boundaries, placing undue administrative and compliance burden on our companies. Lastly, the standard the bill creates using “technically possible” as to whether someone can comply with both is highly subjective and problematic.

MAA supports strong environmental protection and compliance with science-based emission standards, but this bill is not the answer. We ask for an unfavorable report on House Bill 517.

Sincerely,

Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association

HB 517 - Emissions Standards - Ambient Air Quality

Uploaded by: Tom Ballentine

Position: UNF



February 16, 2026

The Honorable, Marc Korman, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Unfavorable: HB 517 – Emissions Standards – Ambient Air Quality Standards – Local Authority

Dear, Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The NAIOP Maryland Chapters, representing more than 700 companies involved in all aspects of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use real estate, recommend your unfavorable report on HB 517 which would alter the provisions of law related to local authority to set emissions standards or ambient air quality standards.

NAIOP supports coordinated, statewide implementation of air-quality and climate-mitigation strategies. HB 517 would undermine that coordination and lead to fragmentation. Our position is based on the following rationale:

- **State-wide Consistency** - Uniform state-wide standards prevent a patchwork of differing local rules that complicate compliance and create bureaucratic confusion for businesses operating across multiple counties.
- **Expertise and Policy Development Resources** - The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) possess financial resources and access to analytical tools needed to develop and implement complex policies. Local governments generally do not.
- **Interstate & Inter-jurisdictional Policy Reach** – Progress on air quality and emissions often involves downstream sources and requires the use of policy tools related to vehicles, utilities and energy generation that are outside of local jurisdiction and lie instead with state agencies, the Public Service Commission, or federal authorities.

For these reasons, NAIOP respectfully recommends an unfavorable report on HB 517.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Ballentine".

Tom Ballentine, Vice President for Policy
NAIOP Maryland Chapters -*The Association for Commercial Real Estate*

cc: Environment and Transportation Committee Members
Nick Manis – Manis, Canning Assoc.

HB 517_MDCC_Emission Standards, Ambient Air Qualit

Uploaded by: Hannah Allen

Position: INFO



House Bill 517

Date: February 18, 2026

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Position: Information

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

House Bill 517 (HB 517) would alter the provisions of law relating to the authority of a political subdivision to adopt ordinances, rules, or regulations that set emission standards or ambient air quality standards under certain conditions.

We believe policies impacting infrastructure and environmental standards should be addressed at the state level to ensure a consistent and predictable regulatory framework for businesses and residents alike. A statewide approach prevents a patchwork of local regulations that could create uncertainty for businesses and impede the development and maintenance of critical infrastructure. When critical projects are subject to varying and potentially conflicting local requirements, the result can be higher costs, delays, and challenges in meeting the state's long-term economic and environmental goals.

It is not clear if the bill intends to codify or expand powers and authority that local governments already have, however it is important to assess whether this is necessary and what potential unintended consequences they may create.

We appreciate your consideration of these comments on **HB 1058**.