

Monday, September 22, 2025

Serena McIlwain, Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment
Meghan Conklin, Chief Sustainability Officer, Office of Governor Wes Moore
Camille Burke, Chair, Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities

Dear Secretary McIlwain, Ms. Conklin, and Ms. Burke:

Thank you for your service and commitment to advancing environmental justice in the State of Maryland. The progress Maryland has made in advancing Environmental Justice (EJ) at the state level is incredibly relevant and important— progress such as establishing definitions of “overburdened” and “underserved” communities, establishing the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities (CEJSC), requiring some permit applicants to submit an Environmental Justice (EJ) score, and Governor Moore’s new executive order creating the Interagency Environmental Justice & Equity Council and annual agency EJ reports. We aspire to further this progress with our recommendations.

As federal protections are dismantled, it’s more important than ever to fight to protect the health and safety of all people, especially those in marginalized communities who often bear the brunt of toxic exposure and other types of environmental injustice. We are hopeful that Maryland will continue to lead and set a strong example for other states to follow.

We are writing to request that the Governor’s office, MDE, and CEJSC build on these initiatives to ensure EJ considerations are centered in decision-making and EJ policies are robustly enforced. Please accept our recommendations below for developing procedures to establish further EJ accountability and community engagement.

1. Support efforts to address cumulative health impacts in environmental permitting, as outlined in the [CHERISH Our Communities Act](#) (Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving our Shared Health) and increase transparency for how cumulative health impacts are addressed (e.g., a public dashboard that tracks impact assessments or quarterly public, plain-language progress reports). We encourage both the interagency council and the commission to endorse and actively support the [CHERISH Our Communities Act](#) when it is reintroduced in 2026.
2. Ensure accessibility to EJ resources by revitalizing the [MDE EJ webpage](#) to include updated information on EJ legislation and executive orders, accessible databases that identify EJ communities and their risks, and links to EJ progress reports. This information should be in plain-language to ensure accessibility to the general public.
3. Include a recommendation in the CEJSC annual report to build accountability into EJ and Justice40 implementation across programs. While the state has begun to include funding requirements for overburdened and underserved communities in legislation, implementation is inconsistent. The disappointing allocation of Greenspace Equity Funds in 2025 is one example.
4. Use the two public meetings of the interagency council to intentionally and thoughtfully seek input from frontline communities on the EJ concerns they find most pressing. If these meetings have numerous concerned community members, the interagency council should work to schedule additional time or dates for public input.
5. Provide a briefing to the Baltimore Just Transition Network and Mid Atlantic Justice Coalition on implementation of the new MDE EnviroScreen mapping tool and plans for implementation of the new Executive Order, and incorporate a public comment process for feedback.

6. Fulfill the directive in the Climate Solutions Now Act to "set appropriate goals for the percentage of state funding for greenhouse gas emission reduction measures that should be used for the benefit of disproportionately affected communities" by recommending at least 40% by 2026.

We, the undersigned organizations and concerned citizens, are eager to hear how the state will take into consideration our recommendations and proceed with enacting and enforcing Maryland's commitment to environmental justice.

Organizations:

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
350.org
Advance Maryland
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Baltimore Green Justice Workers Cooperative (BGJWC)
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry
CEEJH INC — Center for Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health 'INpowering Communities'
Center for Progressive Reform
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
Climate Communications Coalition
Coal Kills Baltimore
Communicate For Health Justice LLC
Fix Maryland Rail
Free Baltimore Yoga
Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU)
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Legislative Coalition - Climate Justice Wing
No Boundaries Coalition, Inc.
OASIS Energy Partners
Out For Justice
South Baltimore Community Land Trust Inc
WeSolar Inc.
Young, Gifted & Green

Concerned Citizens:

Ajshay Barber, Catonsville, Maryland
Alice Wilkerson, Arnold, Maryland
Amira Price, Baltimore, Maryland

Aurora Ramos, Rockville, Maryland
Bolon Xi-Amaru , Baltimore, Maryland
Bolon Zahir Xi-Amaru , Baltimore, Maryland
Brooke Smallwood , Bowie, Maryland
Cara Cook, Catonsville, Maryland
Chelsea Dade, Virginia
Christianne Marguerite, Baltimore, Maryland
Colleen Hylton, Baltimore, Maryland
Daniel Demmitt, Towson, Maryland
Daniel Dykes, Baltimore, Maryland
Dave Arndt, Baltimore, Maryland
Deloris Abrokwa, Olney, Maryland
Diane Wittner, Baltimore, Maryland
Dr. Gabriela Lemus, Silver Spring, Maryland
Esmeralda Hic, Baltimore, Maryland
Glenn Rabut, Baltimore, Maryland
Grace Marshall, Baltimore, Maryland
Heaven Booze, Maryland
Jacob Jackson, Randallstown, Maryland
Jacquelyn Booth, Baltimore, Maryland
John Scheinman, Baltimore, Maryland
Ki'Ana Speights, Baltimore, Maryland
Kim Clemonts, Bowie, Maryland
Kristal Hansley , Baltimore, Maryland
Kyle Long, Baltimore, Maryland
LaTricea Adams, Washington, DC
Lois Wessel, Takoma Park, Maryland
Lynn Pinder, Baltimore, Maryland
Maria Pecora, Baltimore, Maryland
Matthew Aubourg, Baltimore, Maryland
Meleny Thomas, Baltimore, Maryland
Mickey Rogers, Washington, DC
Miriam Avins, Baltimore, Maryland
Naadiya Hutchinson, Baltimore, Maryland
Olivia Lopez, Silver Spring, Maryland

Opal Torrence, Baltimore, Maryland

Rebecca Hopson, Baltimore, Maryland

Samantha Hernandez, Baltimore, Maryland

Slater Knowles, Takoma Park, Maryland

Sonia Demiray, Knoxville, Maryland

Sophia Hoffer-Perkins , Glen Arm, Maryland

Suzanne Fontanesi, Baltimore, Maryland

Tanvi Gadhia, Towson, Maryland

Taylor Smith-Hams, Baltimore, Maryland

Tracey Mitchell, Glen Burnie, Maryland