



Central Maryland Chamber
The Center of Intelligent Business

Legislative Position: Unfavorable
House Bill 596
Constitutional Amendment- Environmental Rights
House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 21, 2022

Dear Chairman Wilson and Members of the Committee,

The Central Maryland Chamber of Commerce (CMC) was formed in 2017, a merger of two existing chambers- The Baltimore Washington Corridor Chamber (originally founded in 1948) and the West Anne Arundel County Chamber (originally founded in 1962). The CMC is a regional organization representing approximately 350 businesses in the Central Maryland corridor and exists to be the primary business resource and advocate as the area experiences exponential growth.

The Central Maryland Chamber is writing to oppose HB596.

The intention of HB596 is well meaning, in efforts to protect Maryland residents from pollution. We understand the problem and the desire to ensure our residents have the right to a healthy environment.

Without a measurable outline of what, exactly, violates someone's "fundamental and inalienable rights to a healthful and sustainable environment," this will be wide open for interpretation and invite complaints, costly defense expenses and possible litigation. Businesses, who are making great efforts in limiting greenhouse gas emissions, are expected to abide by something with no standards but they may be held liable for violating the unexplained mandate?

We all want to live in a healthy environment, but the unintended consequences of sweeping mandates like this need to be considered in advance of such a bill, not after.

Covid-19 has decimated the business community, and to implement something that is so difficult to manage right now will put businesses and individuals at risk for unintentional violations for things beyond their control. Let us focus on measurable, reasonable ways to clean up our environment for the health of our residents without opening doors for misinterpretation and litigation.

The Central Maryland Chamber requests that you vote unfavorably on HB596.