



A coalition of 110 organizations and businesses protecting Marylanders and the natural systems we depend on from the toxic impacts of pesticides—representing communities, businesses, health care providers, farmers, environmentalists, waterkeepers, interfaith congregants as well as environmental justice, public health and wildlife advocates.

Testimony: HB 596 Maryland Constitutional Amendment – Environmental Human Rights

Position: Favorable

Submitted to: The House Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 23, 2022

Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Stein and Members of the Committee:

We want to thank the General Assembly for its leadership on climate issues in Maryland and we want to specifically thank Delegate Fisher for her work on this bill. We hope that Maryland will continue this leadership by passing HB 596, the Environmental Human Rights Amendment.

Smart on Pesticides Coalition is a grassroots coalition of 110 organizations in Maryland dedicated to protecting the public and the environment from toxic pesticides and promoting healthy alternatives. We advocate for pesticide protections and the use of safer alternatives to protect Marylanders, our environment and ecosystems. The work of protecting our people and our planet from environmental degradation is a team effort; now, more than ever, we need all hands on deck.

That's why enshrining the right to a healthy environment into our state constitution is urgent. It would ensure that our environment is always considered in our policymaking, and it would empower us all to defend this right. In particular, it would elevate the voices of marginalized communities who are disproportionately impacted by environmental issues and who, consequently, suffer worse health impacts because of them.

Smart on Pesticides Coalition's work often focuses on the impacts of pesticides on the health of people, pollinators, the Bay ecosystem, and the role pesticides play in hastening climate change. We know firsthand how difficult it can be to make meaningful change in these areas as quickly as they're needed. The reality is, we are running out of time to act on these issues. This constitutional amendment would make it easier to take the actions so desperately needed.

For too long, our planet has come second to other interests and now we're facing the consequences. By passing this bill, we can make sure that Marylanders, the environment, including our water, air, wildlife, and ecosystems of which our pollinators are an important part of, are better protected.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge a favorable report on HB 596.

Bonnie Raindrop
Coordinator, Smart on Pesticides Coalition