



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH &
PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment & Transportation
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SUPPORT House Bill 82/Senate Bill 151** *Constitutional Amendment – Environmental Rights*

Dear Chair Barve, Chair Smith, and Chair Pinsky:

The Maryland Children's Environmental Health & Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC) respectfully submits this letter in **SUPPORT of House Bill 82/Senate Bill 151** *Constitutional Amendment – Environmental Rights*. This bill proposes an amendment to the Maryland Constitution to establish that every person has an inalienable right to a healthful environment and would declare the State's natural resources as the common property of every person, recognizing the State as the trustee of those resources.

The General Assembly established CEHPAC because it found that children in the State face an array of preventable exposures to environmental hazards in their schools, homes, and communities. In most cases children are at greater risk than adults for exposure to and possible illness from environmental hazards because of their behaviors, physiology, and development.

When the General Assembly established CEHPAC it defined in statute (Md. Code Ann., Health-General §§ 13-1501 thru 1506) that CEHPAC must seek to ensure that the rules, regulations, and standards adequately protect the health of children from environmental hazards. CEHPAC's goal is to enable children in Maryland to grow up in a safe and healthy environment. Our duties include providing input to the General Assembly on legislation that may impact environmental hazards that affect the health of children.

All Maryland's children deserve the right to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment. **House Bill 82/Senate Bill 151** would provide a legislative tool to ensure children's health and their environment are protected. CEHPAC has increasingly seen the need to advocate for basic protections for children from environmental hazards, specifically those that are persistent, bio-accumulate, impact water and food, and which are toxic. Such advocacy needs legislative support provided by this amendment in order to be effective in providing children basic human environmental rights protection in Maryland. Therefore, CEHPAC urges the General Assembly to support this proposed amendment to the Maryland Constitution.

CEHPAC looks forward to working with the General Assembly on this and other issues, and thanks you for your leadership on this issue. Please note that the opinions of the Council expressed in this letter do not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or any other State agency.

Sincerely,

Megan Latshaw, PhD MHS

On Behalf of the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council