



July 27, 2020

Dear Representative:

The undersigned members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition, the Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed, and the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition urge you to cosponsor the Environmental Justice For All Act (H.R.5986). Together, our coalitions represent more than 500 organizations across the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware River, and Great Lakes watersheds, which covers more than 370,000 square miles and is home to over 60 million residents across 13 states and the District of Columbia.

In the midst of a public health crisis, the need for clean air and clean water is stronger than ever. It is no coincidence that marginalized communities continue to bear the burden of living in close proximity to hazardous sites, facing higher risk for exposure to toxic chemicals and associated health impacts like asthma and lead poisoning. As our nation grapples with racism, we must recognize that our environmental laws and policies contribute to this never-ending cycle. The Environmental Justice For All Act seeks to break this cycle and would strengthen legal protections to combat environmental injustices. With this bill, people in cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, Trenton, Wilmington, Cleveland, and Philadelphia, could bring statutory claims for damages under common law and request injunctive relief for environmentally caused health crisis events that have severe impacts on children and future generations. It would restore the right for individuals to bring actions under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against entities engaging in discriminatory practices.

All too often, pollution disproportionately impacts indigenous communities, people of color, and low-income families. This bill would help to protect such communities by requiring the consideration of cumulative impacts in permitting decisions under the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. It would require federal agencies to provide early and meaningful community involvement, including tribal representation, under the National Environmental Policy Act when proposing an action affecting an environmental justice community. Additionally, this bill would establish a fund to use revenues from fees on oil, gas, and coal industries to support communities and workers as they transition away from greenhouse gas-dependent economies.

Furthermore, this bill emphasizes the need for equitable access to the outdoors and nature, which provides countless benefits to underserved communities. Studies show that a thriving environment is invaluable for emotional, mental, and physical health, and Covid-19 has provided a real-world case study of the importance of getting outdoors in a safe and clean environment. This bill would prioritize projects that create access to parks and recreational opportunities in urban areas. This bill would also authorize \$75 million annually for grants to support research, education, outreach, development, and implementation of projects to address environmental and public health issues in environmental justice communities.

This legislation would benefit millions of residents in the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware River, and Great Lakes watersheds by ensuring equal protection from harmful and unnecessary exposure to pollutants in the environment. We must act now to undo the burdens that have been placed on marginalized communities suffering from adverse public health impacts. Ignoring the lack of regulation and enforcement of key environmental protections will perpetuate marginalized communities. Thank you for considering cosponsorship of H.R. 5986, the Environmental Justice For All Act.

Please contact Peter J. Marx at peter@choosecleanwater.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Alice Ferguson Foundation	Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance	Church Women United in New York State
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay	Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Alliance for the Great Lakes	Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley	Clean Fairfax Council
American Canoe Association	Clean Water Action
American Chestnut Land Trust	Clean Wisconsin
American Littoral Society	Cleanwater Liganore, Inc
American Rivers	Coalition for Smarter Growth
Anacostia Riverkeeper	Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Anacostia Watershed Society	Conserve Wildlife Foundation
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	Darby Creek Valley Association
Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy	Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions	Delaware Nature Society
Audubon Naturalist Society	Detroit Audubon
Audubon Society of Northern Virginia	Earth Force
Baltimore Green Space	Earth Forum of Howard County
Baltimore Tree Trust	Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Beaverdam Creek Watershed Watch Group	Elks Run Watershed Group
Blue Heron Environmental Network	Enviroeneers, Inc.
Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition	Environment New Jersey
Blue Water Baltimore	Environmental Integrity Project
Bucks County Audubon Society	Environmental Justice Center of Chestnut Hill United Church
Butternut Valley Alliance	For Love of Water
Cacapon Institute	FracTracker
Capital Region Land Conservancy	Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space
Chapman Forest Foundation	Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek
Chemung River Friends	Friends of Quincy Run
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Friends of Sligo Creek
Chesapeake Climate Action Network	Friends of the Bohemia
Chesapeake Conservancy	Friends of the Middle River
Chesapeake Legal Alliance	Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River

Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
GreenTreks Network
Griffith Izaak Walton League
Guardians of the Brandywine
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Hoosier Environmental Council
Huron River Watershed Council
Illinois Council Trout Unlimited
Illinois Environmental Council
Indiana Wildlife Federation
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Izaak Walton League of America
James River Association
Junction Coalition
Ken Lockwood Chapter Trout Unlimited
Lackawanna River Conservation Association
Lake Hopatcong Foundation
Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership
Lancaster Clean Water Partners
Lancaster County Conservancy
Lancaster Farmland Trust
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Little Falls Watershed Alliance
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania
Lynnhaven River NOW
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Native Plant Society
Mattawoman Watershed Society
Michigan League of Conservation Voters
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Water Commons
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Namati
National Aquarium
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
NeighborSpace of Baltimore County
New Jersey Conservation Foundation
New Jersey Environmental Lobby
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters

New Jersey Sustainable Business Council
Newtown Creek Coalition
Ohio Environmental Council
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Onondaga Audubon
Opequon Creek Project Team
Otsego County Conservation Association
Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
Patapsco Heritage Greenway
PennFuture
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust
Piedmont Environmental Council
Pinelands Preservation Alliance
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Protect Hanover
Rachel Carson Council
Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection
Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes
River Alliance of Wisconsin
River Network
Riverfront North Partnership
Rock Creek Conservancy
SaveThe River Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper
ShoreRivers
Sierra Club
Sierra Club - Maryland Chapter
Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester
Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
SouthWings
Surfrider Foundation – DC Chapter
Surfrider Foundation- Virginia Chapter
Susquehanna National Heritage Area
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Tookany Tacony Frankford Watershed Partnership
Transition Howard County
UrbanPromise

Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Warm Springs Watershed Association
Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore, Inc.
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Watts Branch Watershed Alliance

West Virginia Environmental Council
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
West Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
West Virginia Wilderness Coalition
Western New York Environmental Alliance
Wetlands Watch
Wisconsin Green Muslims