



Testimony to The SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SB 96 - Environment - Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions

POSITION: Support

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: March 5, 2024

Since the emergence of the environment movement in the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes that promoting environmental justice is critical for protecting our environment and supporting our communities.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports SB 96**, which would require the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to conduct a climate and equity review for environmental permits that may impact overburdened and underserved communities. **SB 96** would also expand transparency and community involvement by implementing new reporting standards, and requiring MDE to provide opportunities for Marylanders to receive notifications about permit applications near them.

Overburdened and underserved communities - namely low-income communities and communities of color - **disproportionately bear the brunt** of climate pollution and its associated health impacts. Projects that degrade air and water quality are often placed in these overburdened and underserved census tracts, perpetuating inequities in opportunity and health outcomes. **SB 96** would work to protect these communities from further environmental injustice at the hands of the state's permitting process.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report on SB 96.**