



April 22, 2021

Dear Senator:

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 (S. 872). 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. The same would be true for marginalized communities in rural areas who face similar health impacts. It would strengthen the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by restoring the ability of individuals to bring actions 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, program development, and implementation of projects to improve 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 S. 872, the Environmental Justice for All Act.

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

Sincerely,

American Canoe Association	Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Action Together Northeastern Pennsylvania	Citizens to Conserve and Restore Indian Creek
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay	Clean Air Council
Alliance for the Great Lakes	Clean Water Action
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley	Clean Water Action Minnesota
Anacostia Watershed Society, Inc.	Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions	Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey
Appalachian Mountain Club	Defensores de la Cuenca
Aquashicola/Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy	Delaware Audubon
Audubon Great Lakes	Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Audubon Mid-Atlantic	Delaware Nature Society
Audubon Naturalist Society	Delaware River Greenway Partnership
Berks Nature	Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition	Earth Force
Bucks County Audubon Society	Earth Forum of Howard County
Cacapon Institute	Earthworks
Canaan Valley Institute	Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Capital Regional Land Conservancy	EcoLatinos, Inc.
Catskill Center	Environmental Defense Fund
Center for Aquatic Sciences	Environmental Justice Center of Chestnut Hill United Church
Center for Progressive Reform	Environmental Justice Law Society
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Environmental Law & Policy Center
Chesapeake Conservancy	For Love of Water
Chesapeake Legal Alliance	

FracTracker Alliance
Friends of Heinz Refuge
Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek
Friends of the Cacapon River
Friends of the Upper Delaware River
Friends of the Nanticoke River
Friends of the Wissahickon
Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association
Green Rock Audubon Society
Guardians of the Brandywine
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Izaak Walton League of America - Indiana Division
James River Association
Junction Coalition
Lackawanna River Conservation Association
Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership
Latino Outdoors
Lehigh Valley Audubon Society
LightHawk
League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region
Lynnhaven River NOW
Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Pesticide Education Network
Maryland United for Peace and Justice
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Milwaukee Water Commons
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Mountain Lakes Preservation Alliance
Musconetcong Watershed Association
National Aquarium
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
New Jersey Audubon
New Jersey Highlands Coalition
New Jersey League of Conservation Voters
New Jersey Sustainable Business Council
Newtown Creek Coalition
Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition
Otsego County Conservation Association
Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
PennFuture
Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust
Pocono Heritage Land Trust
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Upstream Alliance
Protect Hanover
Rachel Carson Council
River Alliance of Wisconsin
River Network
Riverfront North Partnership
Rock Creek Conservancy
Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc.
Save The River- Upper St Lawrence Riverkeeper
Schuylkill Headwaters Association
ShoreRivers
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
Southern Environmental Law Center
SouthWings

St. Mary's River Watershed Association
Sustainable South Jersey
The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey
The Piedmont Environmental Council
The Watershed Institute
The Wetland Trust, Inc.
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership
Trash Free Maryland
Trout Unlimited
University of Delaware Water Resources Center
Valley Forge Audubon Society
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Conservation Network

Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Warm Springs Watershed Association
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
Watershed Institute
West Virginia Environmental Council
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
West Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
White Clay Watershed Association
Wicomico Environmental Trust, Ltd.
West Virginia Citizen Action Group
West Virginia Wilderness Coalition
Wyncote Audubon Society