



Maryland Chamber of Commerce

Legislative Position

**SB 4
OPPOSE
Education,
Health &
Environmental
Affairs
Committee
02/03/09**

SB 4

Environment - Permitting Process – Environmental Justice Review

Brief Summary of Bill:

Senate Bill 4 prohibits the MDE from issuing or renewing (various environmental) permits until the permit applicant conducts an environmental justice review to determine if an environmentally stressed community is disproportionately negatively affected by the proposed action. Before construction of a new LNG facility or the expansion of an existing LNG facility, the owner must conduct an environmental justice review. If the department determines that a proposed action will disproportionately affect an environmentally stressed community, the applicant or owner must satisfy a series of requirements before receiving the permit or commencing the proposed action.

Maryland Chamber's Position:

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce ("Maryland Chamber") opposes this bill. An environmental justice review requirement for all initial permits and permit renewals is a very broad application that could put into jeopardy sites currently in operation when permits are to be renewed or when permit modification applications are submitted.

The 2 mile radius requirement is too expansive, and there is little to no environmental impact at that distance. The requirement to review *all* properties for one year before DSP is required to map environmentally stressed areas is not practical and gets ahead of the intended goal. If reviews are to be done, they should be limited to designated areas that are truly environmentally stressed. Additionally, this bill would add yet another step in the permit application process, which will increase permit issuance time tables, as well as permitting costs for additional resources, such as technical consultants.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber respectfully requests that the Committee give Senate Bill 4 an unfavorable report.

If questions please contact Allyson Black, ablack@mdchamber.org