



NEW JERSEY URBAN MAYORS ASSOCIATION
c/o The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy
Thomas Edison State University
315 W. State St.
Trenton, NJ 08618

July 16th, 2020

Assemblyman Craig J. Coughlin
569 Rahway Ave.
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Assemblyman John McKeon
221 Main St.
Madison, NJ 07940

Assemblyman John DiMaio
208 Mountain Ave., Suite 3
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Assemblywoman Nancy J. Pinkin
3 Stephenville Pkwy., Suite 2D
Edison, NJ 08820

Assemblyman James J. Kennedy
1445 Main St.
Rahway, NJ 07065

Assemblyman Gerard Scharfenberger
225 Route 35, Suite 202
Red Bank, NJ 07701

Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez
211 Front St.
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861

Dear Assembly Speaker and Assembly Members of the Environment and Solid Waste Committee,

There is strong evidence in New Jersey and other parts of the country that the amount of pollution in communities is connected to the race and income of residents in a way that is problematic and unjust. Communities of color and low-income communities - environmental justice (EJ) communities - often have elevated levels of pollution that pose a threat to the health of their residents. Multiple sources emit pollutants that are detrimental to the health of community residents. Individual pollutants are harmful, and also cause harm when they mix with each other and combine with social vulnerabilities that are often rooted in race and a lack of income. The risks and effects caused by these pollutants and vulnerabilities are called cumulative impacts and they are a problem that particularly plagues EJ communities.

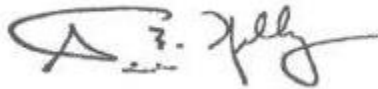
Urban mayors have witnessed this unfortunate phenomenon up-close. Although it has not prevented our cities from providing good homes to New Jersey residents, we understand our municipalities would thrive even more if we could improve the health of New Jersey EJ communities by addressing cumulative impacts. The New Jersey EJ Alliance, Ironbound Community Corporation and Clean Water Acton, along with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Governor's Office, are urging the state to adopt legislation that attacks this issue. The New Jersey Urban Mayors Association (NJUMA) supports their efforts and the specific bill that is being considered by the state legislature, S232/A2212, as it is currently formulated, without any

weakening amendments. We believe it is a good initial effort to decrease pollution and make our cities better places to live. The bill would scrutinize pollution permit applications for new facilities, expanded facilities and facilities seeking renewals. Permit applications for new or expanded facilities would be denied, and conditions would be placed on facilities requesting renewals, if it is determined they would disproportionately impact New Jersey EJ communities. With the COVID-19 pandemic revealing vulnerabilities in our EJ communities that are at least partly based in race and pollution, and the country attempting to make progress on issues of racial justice, now is the time to adopt and implement this long overdue legislation.

Established in 1991, the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association is dedicated to working with state and federal lawmakers and officials to develop appropriate and effective public policy measures that benefit the state's urban centers and to help lawmakers understand how public policy affects New Jersey's urban municipalities. The NJUMA is comprised of 32 New Jersey urban municipalities and serves its members through meetings and annual conferences which keep them informed about issues affecting their ability to provide adequate services to their residents. The NJUMA also assists its members in interpreting legislation and state policy, and has worked to define New Jersey's urban policy agenda.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this matter. If you have any questions or would like to share any pertinent information for our NJUMA members please contact Ishiya Hayes, Senior Policy Fellow for the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association, at (609) 777-4351 ext. 4254 or via email at ihayes@tesu.edu.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Albert Kelly
Mayor of Bridgeton
President of NJUMA



The Honorable Ras Baraka
Mayor of Newark
Vice President of NJUMA