

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
NYSAAP, District II, A coalition of Chapters 1, 2 & 3



April 25, 2022

Memorandum of Support A.2103D/S.8830

Cumulative Environmental Impact Addressing Environmental/Health Equity

NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, representing more than 5,000 pediatricians across New York State strongly supports the Cumulative Impacts Bill. Passage of this legislation will amend the environmental conservation law in relation to the location of environmental facilities. If implemented, it will provide protection for the most vulnerable children and families across the state from the well-known and proven hazards of living near environmentally dangerous, sometimes even toxic sites. It will also create future protections by requiring a cumulative impact study prior to new potentially toxic sites being located in vulnerable areas already home to a number of existing environmentally challenging facilities.

Clean air and clean water cannot be protected only for those with the resources to fight against siting potentially dangerous facilities in their neighborhoods. This is an environmental justice bill, and it should be passed and implemented this year.

The bill requires environmental impact statements to define whether the siting of a specific new facility will cause or increase a disproportionate burden on low income areas and establishes provisions regulating the location of environmental facilities to ensure Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities or economically distressed areas with people of all racial backgrounds are treated equitably.

The legislation directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to modify its permitting, monitoring, and enforcement standards to address high concentrations of environmental facilities in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and economically distressed predominantly white communities. On average, black New Yorkers live three years less than their white counterparts.

Across the state BIPOC communities of all economic strata and low-income predominantly white communities bear the brunt of environmental pollution. Environmental hazards have been repeatedly permitted to be built in their communities.

The consequences of these public policy choices are self-evident in public health data. Implementing S.1031-C /A.2103-C can have a significantly positive impact on the health of BIPOC and low-income predominantly white communities. It will also begin to address New York State's shameful legacy of siting toxic facilities within and around communities who have already been disproportionately impacted by environmental health hazards.

The children and families in all communities across the state deserve, and in fact, have a right to clean air and clean water. This legislation will bring us closer to environmental equity. It will also create a process to protect the most vulnerable children and families in the most distressed communities from being exposed to the highest level of dangerous contaminants in the air they breathe and the water they drink. It is imperative that we pass this legislation this session and begin to create a healthier more equitable facility siting process across our state.

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