

WHEREAS, The State supports and is committed to the principle of environmental justice and equal protection of all citizens of the State in a manner that fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, Major statewide revitalization initiatives for reducing sprawl, encouraging redevelopment, and enhancing community life address environmental conditions of our communities and provide new economic opportunities in these communities, while preserving more pristine areas from sprawl and additional pollution; and

WHEREAS, Economic development and environmental protection are interdependent, and equal treatment and opportunities must be afforded to all citizens of the State by involving affected communities; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 741 of the Acts of 1997 established the Maryland Advisory Council on Environmental Justice, which made recommendations for assessing and implementing environmental protection to communities in a fair and equitable manner throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 585 of the Acts of 2000 established the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council to recommend, in part, solutions to environmental justice issues affecting the health of children; and

WHEREAS, Certain communities in the State may suffer disproportionately from environmental hazards related to programs and policies designed to encourage industrial, municipal, or commercial revitalization; and

WHEREAS, Fair treatment suggests that no community should disproportionately suffer the negative environmental impacts resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the implementation of State, local, and municipal programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice considerations should be integrated into the State's revitalization initiatives for reducing sprawl, encouraging redevelopment, and enhancing community life; and

WHEREAS, Environmental justice does not need to hinder economic development, and economic development and environmental equity in the State can and should be effectively balanced; and

WHEREAS, An executive order was issued and signed by former Governor Parris Glendening to create a temporary Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

#### **Article - Environment**

1-101.

(a) In this article the following words have the meanings indicated.