



City of Detroit  
Detroit City Council - District 4

## MEMORANDUM

TO: David Whitaker, Legislative Policy Division

DATE: August 27, 2025

FROM: Latisha Johnson  
District 4 Councilmember

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Latisha Johnson".

**SUBJECT: Request to Draft Resolution in Support of the Protecting Overburdened Communities Act**

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Greetings,

Please draft a resolution in support of the Protecting Overburdened Communities Act (known as POCA), known in the State of Michigan Legislature as SB479<sup>1</sup> and HB4727<sup>2</sup>. This bill would require the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to conduct an Environmental Justice Impact Assessment of the host communities for new permit applications. The bill also provides restrictions and requires mitigation measures if the community is determined to be overburdened by pollution, socioeconomic, and health impacts.

Detroit-based legislators, Senator Stephanie Chang and Representative Donovan McKinney are championing the Protecting Overburdened Communities Act (POCA) in Lansing, but it is also supported by several grassroots organizations that work state-wide, including the Clear the Air Coalition, the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition, and the Ecology Center. Clean air is a state-wide issue, but this policy would especially benefit Detroiters who tend to live closer to industry and have higher rates of asthma than most Michiganders. POCA also follows a nation-wide policy shift, as 8 states have already implemented similar “cumulative impacts” legislation.<sup>3</sup>

EGLE currently evaluates permit applications in isolation of each other. For example, if a hazardous waste processing facility wants to open in the same neighborhood as a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-SB-0479>

<sup>2</sup> <https://legislature.mi.gov/Bills/Bill?ObjectName=2025-HB-4742>

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://planetdetroit.org/2025/07/air-pollution-michigan-cumulative-bill/>

trucking distribution center and a manufacturing plant, EGLE would only assess the impacts of the facility that applied for a new permit, not the existing sources of pollution or other community health indicators. By requiring state environmental regulators to evaluate and consider cumulative health impacts when deciding whether to allow polluting facilities to operate in a community, this law will protect Michigan communities that have been the most over-burdened by the health impacts of an industrial economy. The Environmental Justice Impact Assessments required by this legislation will also provide valuable information and data for government leaders to use when advocating for community benefits and determining how to help mitigate harmful impacts to promote wellness.

If you have any questions, contact our Policy Analyst, Erin Stanley at [erin.stanley@detroitmi.gov](mailto:erin.stanley@detroitmi.gov).