November 16, 2017

The Honorable Cory A. Booker
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

On behalf of the more than 400,000 members of the American Bar Association (ABA), I write to express our gratitude for your commitment to environmental equality by making S. 1996, the Environmental Justice Act, a top priority in the 115th Congress.

I was delighted to see the introduction of this legislation in the House and Senate and the ABA stands ready to assist you in moving this important legislation through the process. For decades the ABA has supported efforts to make sure that a disproportionate share of the burden of environmental harm does not fall on minority and low-income communities. Your legislation requiring federal agencies to address environmental equality will help our nation respond to the concerns of vulnerable communities and the devastating effects of pollution.

Communities of color, indigenous communities, and low-income populations are more likely to be located near hazardous sites and exposed to toxins. Achieving environmental justice would result in the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards for all people and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

With this proposal, environmental justice has its own landmark legislation, as clean air and water do. By requiring air and water permitting to look at cumulative impacts to vulnerable communities and clarifying citizens’ right to sue, this legislation helps us remove barriers to justice for victims of man-made environmental disasters.

Thank you again for your leadership to help achieve greater environmental equality. If you or your staff have any questions, feel free to contact David Eppstein in the ABA Governmental Affairs Office at david.eppstein@americanbar.org or (202) 662-1766.

Sincerely,

Hilarie Bass