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**Written Testimony**

**Senate Bill 978 - Environmental Permits - Requirements for Public  
Participation and Impact and Burden Analyses  
(CHERISH Our Communities Act)**

**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – February 25, 2025  
Support**

**Background: Senate Bill 978** would address the disproportionate environmental and public health harms that environmental justice communities in Maryland face from pollution generating facilities. The bill identifies facility types that pose a risk to environmental and human health, and the permits that these facilities need to operate.

**Written Comments:** The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* means to repair the world in which we live. As the advocacy arm of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, we represent organizations that work to educate the community on sustainability and make strides towards repairing the world.

Maryland needs a law to tackle the cumulative impacts of pollution. Cumulative impacts occur when multiple pollution sources combine, amplifying harm to our health and environment. This is most often found in communities like those in Baltimore where overlapping threats like factory emissions, traffic pollution, and toxic landfills create a much greater risk.

Our support for this legislation is grounded in core values of the Jewish faith: actively pursuing justice, “tzedek, tzedek tirdof,” and repairing the world, “tikkun olam.” By establishing adequate permit reviews to ensure we are not overburdening communities with pollution sources, we are ensuring the health and safety of all those who reside in these areas across our State.

**For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB978.**

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*