

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB 978 - CHERISH Our Communities Act
Submitting: Veronica Gasca
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 25, 2025

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Veronica Gasca, and I have lived in Baltimore County District 6 for the past 19 years. I am a mother of two daughters, ages 11 and 13, and I am writing today in full support of the CHERISH Our Communities Act (SB 978).

I consider myself fortunate that my daughters enjoy good health and do not suffer from respiratory illnesses. However, we live in a community with some of the highest levels of air pollution. The quality of the air we breathe is not just a personal concern—it is a public health issue that disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color.

Clean air is essential to protecting the well-being of current and future generations, particularly children who are most vulnerable to pollution-related illnesses like asthma. SB 978 is a much-needed step toward environmental justice, ensuring that cumulative impacts from all pollution sources are thoroughly analyzed when the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) reviews permit applications. This comprehensive approach will help prevent further harm to our communities and hold polluters accountable.

I urge you to support SB 978 and take decisive action to safeguard the health of Maryland's families. Thank you for your time and commitment to this important issue.

Sincerely,
Veronica Gasca