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**Testimony on SB 978**  
**CHERISH Our Communities Act**  
**Senate Energy, Education, and Environment Committee**

**Date: February 25, 2025**

**Position: SUPPORT**

I write as a physician in Baltimore City to urge you to bring a **Favorable** report on SB 978.

This bill addresses a critical gap in Maryland's environmental protection system. Currently, when considering new permits to pollute, Maryland does not evaluate how multiple pollution sources in one area combine to affect public health. This means new permits are reviewed in isolation, without considering the total (or cumulative) impact on local residents' health. Following the lead of states including New Jersey, New York, and Minnesota, the CHERISH Our Communities Act will reform Maryland's permitting system to better protect communities that already face heavy pollution burdens.

This is only fair. If nothing else, just considering the burden of asthma on some communities we are compelled to act. I urge you to take such action by giving a **Favorable** report on SB 978.

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