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**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 978 – Certificate of Public Convenience and  
Necessity – Environmental Impact Analysis and Existing Burden Report**

Education, Energy, and the Environment  
February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB978** on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Deeply rooted in the South, West, and Rhode Rivers, Arundel Rivers Federation heals and protects our waterways and champions clean water across Maryland. Our vision is healthy waterways for all, and we achieve our mission through restoration, education and outreach, and Riverkeeper programs.

Arundel Rivers strongly supports SB978, or the CHERISH Act, which will provide important, targeted environmental health protections for the communities in Maryland most overburdened by pollution. The CHERISH Act amends Maryland's environmental law to provide adequate environmental impact assessment and opportunities for public participation for new, renewed, and expanded environmental permits that are issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Incorporating public feedback is a critical part of the permitting process that ensures that MDE's decision-making processes are transparent and inclusive.

As Maryland confronts an energy crisis, we can and must make sure we do not increase pollution on already-overburdened communities. SB978 is a necessary and timely bill to protect the most polluted communities in Maryland from more pollution and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT on SB978.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation