



**SUPPORT- SB0978**

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**SB0978 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - Environmental  
Impact Analysis and Existing Burden Report  
2025 CHERISH Act - Support**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Sonia Demiray, I am the Executive Director of the Climate Communications Coalition, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition, and of the Maryland Climate Justice Wing. The Climate Communications Coalition urges a favorable report on SB0978.

The CHERISH Act puts the health and well-being of Marylanders first and ensures that the decision making process around the location of any new polluting facility is transparent and inclusive. The CHERISH Act will help all Marylanders and our environment by requiring common sense permits such as much needed expanded air quality control and refusal disposal. Currently, facilities that pose a risk to environmental and human health, including incinerators, biomass burning plants, pellet factories, biogas digesters, landfills, and fossil fuel burning plants, are frequently built amid economically stressed communities compounding the negative health effects caused by polluted air and water. Applying the CHERISH Act to tracts that have an EJ score of 75 or higher, would protect these communities from additional environmental and health burdens.

The CHERISH Act would also require an environmental impact statement and an existing burden report for permit applications of highly polluting facilities. It will reflect any enforcement actions on a publicly accessible website so that impacted communities can protect themselves, and it would direct 25% of any penalties back into the communities that have been harmed.

Maryland is falling behind New Jersey, New York and Minnesota in protecting its communities – let's reverse this trend by passing the CHERISH Act, which is also in line with our Climate Pollution Reduction Plan and the Climate Implementation Plan.

Please protect Marylanders. We urge a favorable report on SB0978.

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