

Testimony in favor of SB978

Environmental Permits - Requirements for Public Participation and Impact and Burden Analyses (Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)

To: Hon. Brian Feldman, Chair, Hon. Cheryl Kagan, Vice-chair and members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: Jerry Kickenson

Date: February 21, 2025

I am writing in **favor of Senate Bill 978**, Environmental Permits - Requirements for Public Participation and Impact and Burden Analyses (Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act).

The CHERISH Our Communities Act would finally require environmental impact analysis to ensure permitted activities do not make environmental conditions even worse, especially in communities already overburdened by cumulative adverse environmental impacts. It is only common sense to consider a holistic view of the newly proposed impact in concert with existing and other impacts. The requirement in this bill to include an environmental justice score will finally add some teeth to previous recommendations to do so.

In this time where the federal government is retreating from anything resembling environmental justice, or indeed environmental protection more generally, Maryland must act to protect its communities and residents.

I respectfully urge you to reach a **favorable** report for SB978.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson

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