



SUPPORT- HB1484

Sonia Demiray
Climate Communications Coalition
sonia@demirayink.com
202-744-2948

HB1484 Environmental Permits - Requirements for Public Participation and Impact and Burden Analyses (Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)

Environment and Transportation Committee

March 11, 2025

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation 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 HB1484.

The CHERISH Act puts the health and well-being of Marylander's 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 amidst economically stressed communities, compounding negative health effects among the most vulnerable through additional air and water pollution. 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 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 other States 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. Let's protect all of our communities.

We urge a favorable report on HB1484.

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