



**Testimony on HB1484**  
**House Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**March 11, 2025**

Written testimony to the House Environment and Transportation Committee provided by the Environmental Integrity Project, **Supporting HB1484 with Amendments.**

The Environmental Integrity Project (“EIP”) submits testimony supporting HB1484, the CHERISH Act, with amendments. Regarding amendments, the bill could be improved by revising it to streamline and simplify its requirements. For example, the current bill requires the development of two reports – an Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) and Existing Burden Report (EBR) - and the contents of those reports could be condensed into one report. It is our understanding that the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition will be submitting several amendments for the purpose of simplifying and streamlining the bill’s requirements and reducing associated administrative costs. We support these amendments.

With these changes, EIP strongly supports the CHERISH Act.

Neighborhoods like Curtis Bay in the southern part of Baltimore City have been overburdened for generations by environmental pollution that harms public health and well-being. Not only must these communities contend with air, water, and soil pollution, but they are also subject to other adverse effects from these facilities, such as fires, explosions and chemical leaks. Since December 2021, Curtis Bay has experienced all of these events: a large explosion at the nearby coal export terminal, a leak from a chemical plant, and a fire at a petroleum-products handling facility. The U.S. EPA’s EJScreen, before it was removed from the agency’s website, ranked the Curtis Bay area in the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile of EPA’s Region 3 for an indicator measuring proximity to sites that pose a risk of fire, explosion, or chemical release.

Other states, like New York and New Jersey, have passed laws that require environmental agencies to consider the impacts on residents of neighborhoods where pollution sources are clustered together in relatively small areas. These laws also authorize or require agencies to adjust their decision-making based on this consideration, including requiring denying permits and/or strengthening permit conditions where appropriate. Maryland should follow the lead of these states and provide similar protection to its residents.

For all of these reasons, the Environmental Integrity Project supports the CHERISH Act with amendments.