

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

**Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

As a resident of Baltimore City and concerned student of Benjamin Franklin High at Masonville Cove, I am writing to express my strong support of HB1484, the CHERISH Our Communities Act. South Baltimore has long suffered from the cumulative environmental harms caused by the over 70 industrial facilities operating in our communities. These industries release toxic pollutants into the air and water, disproportionately affecting the health and well-being of residents, particularly students like me. Benjamin Franklin High School is located just a quarter of a mile from some of these heavily polluting sites, putting students at constant risk of exposure to hazardous air pollution, including particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, and other toxic emissions. These pollutants are known to contribute to respiratory diseases, heart conditions, and other long-term health complications, making it even harder for students to focus on their education and thrive in a safe learning environment.

The impacts of this pollution extend beyond our health; they directly interfere with our daily lives. Many of my peers struggle with asthma and other respiratory illnesses, conditions that are only exacerbated by the heavy industrial pollution surrounding our school. Instead of enjoying clean air and a healthy community, we are forced to navigate an environment that threatens our well-being. The CHERISH Our Communities Act is essential to addressing these injustices by placing stronger environmental protections in place and ensuring that the voices of impacted communities are heard. I urge you to support HB1484 and take a stand for the health, safety, and future of students like me, who deserve to grow up and learn in an environment free from toxic pollution across the state of Maryland

Sincerely,

Jose Alvarenga