



**SB 0781 - SUPPORT**

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**SB 0781**

**Environmental Permits - Requirements for Burden Analysis, Issuance and Renewal, and Public Participation (Cumulative Harms for Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)**

Education, Energy, and the Environment

March 3, 2026

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

The Climate Communications Coalition is a Maryland-based grassroots climate and environmental justice non-profit, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition, and of the Maryland Climate Justice Wing, among others. The Climate Communications Coalition strongly supports SB 0781.

The CHERISH Act gives communities that have been overburdened by pollution a much-needed voice and safeguard against further injustice. Impacts from pollution cause cancer, respiratory and heart diseases, shorten lifespans, and can dramatically reduce quality of life.

The CHERISH Act will provide communities with an opportunity to comment when a new source of pollution applies to be located in their midst, and it empowers the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to protect environmental justice communities based on specific geographic locations. The CHERISH principles will be applied mostly to air pollution permits, water pollution permits for a narrow list of types of industries, and waste disposal permits, for new highly polluting facilities and the renewal of some existing facilities.

The CHERISH Act protects Maryland communities and the environment by incorporating cumulative impacts into the MDE and Public Service Commission permitting processes – a guardrail that has successfully been implemented in other states including New Jersey, Minnesota, and New York.

The Climate Communications Coalition respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 0781.

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