

Testimony for SB0781 (CHERISH ACT)
Cumulative Harms to Environmental Restoration
for Improving Shared Health

Bill Sponsor: Senator Brooks

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Chesapeake Earth Holders Community

Person Submitting: Jeffrey V. Johnson, Ph.D, Co-Founder, Board Member

Position: FAVORABLE

My name is Jeffrey V. Johnson and I live in Reisterstown, Legislative District 10. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Chesapeake Earth Holders Community which is a member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition as well as the Interfaith Power and Light DMV Network of faith based congregations.

As an environmental health scientist and Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland with a PhD in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, I believe the CHERISH Act addresses a vitally important concern that has been the subject of my own research for many years: the impact of combined environmental exposures on the health of vulnerable populations.

The CHERISH Act will dramatically improve the State of Maryland's capacity to protect vulnerable communities from the adverse health impact of the total combined pollution produced by multiple sources in their environment.

The CHERISH Act will focus on protecting those communities that are already the most polluted and the most vulnerable with the fewest socioeconomic resources. The CHERISH Act proposes to use an already well developed measure of combined adverse environmental exposures to identify the 25% highest risk communities in our state.

The CHERISH Act will serve to protect individuals within communities that are already at risk from **new** exposures that are likely to add further to their environmental burden and health risk. We strongly support the CHERISH Act, SB0781, and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

