



TESTIMONY TO: SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

SB 780 - Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act)

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda T. Kohn, President

DATE: March 3, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes that advancing environmental justice is essential to creating an equitable and sustainable future for all Marylanders.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports SB 780**, the CHERISH Our Communities Act, which applies to Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity issued by the Public Service Commission for new or expanded power plants or energy generation facilities. **SB 780** would prevent new polluting energy generation facilities from being built if the Commission determines that doing so would contribute to disproportionate pollution and health impacts for the nearby community.

This bill ensures that impacted communities have a voice in PSC permitting decisions through a public deliberation process. **SB 780** applies only to areas in the state that are disproportionately burdened by pollution, and applies only to new or expanded polluting energy generation facilities. Therefore, this bill does not apply to wind, solar, or geothermal energy projects.

Overburdened and underserved communities - namely low-income communities and communities of color - disproportionately bear the brunt of pollution and its associated health impacts in our state. Projects that degrade air and water quality are often placed in overburdened and underserved census tracts, which perpetuates inequities in opportunity and health outcomes. **SB 780** would work to protect these communities from further environmental injustice at the hands of the state's permitting process.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report on SB 780.**