



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 780

Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act)

Date: March 3, 2026

To: Senate Education, Energy, & Environment Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Gussie Maguire,
MD Staff Scientist

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 780** which requires applicants for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for certain types of energy generation to include a Baseline Understanding of Risk, Disparities, and Environmental Needs or BURDEN Report. The requirement does not apply to clean, renewable energy generation at wind, solar, or geothermal stations.

BURDEN Reports must include the EJ scores for census tracts within 1.5 miles of the site and include existing pollution sources impacting at-risk census tracts as well as existing public health stressors. CPCN applications for energy generation facilities that would worsen those stressors could only be approved if the project would serve a public interest in the at-risk census tract in which it is located.

This bill responds to historic inequities, where poor communities, often communities of color, have been forced to share space with disproportionate numbers of industrial facilities, landfills, incinerators, power plants, and other pollution sources. Overburdened communities face health impacts as well as damage and lack of safe access to natural spaces. Emissions and discharges from multiple facilities within a single watershed place undue stress on the waterway and its surroundings. Requiring an analysis of the environmental and health burdens already impacting an area will help the Public Service Commission make informed decisions about where it can responsibly allow for additional emissions and other impacts of energy generation.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 780.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.