

February 27, 2026

Testimony on: SB781 – CHERISH Our Communities Act

Submitting: Clara Gonzalez

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 3, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Clara Gonzalez, and I am grateful for the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of SB781 – the CHERISH Our Communities Act. I have lived in Baltimore’s zip code 21205 for the past eight years, where I have experienced the urgent need for environmental justice in our communities.

As a Promotora of Environmental Justice with CHISPA Maryland, a program of the Maryland League of Conservation Voters, I am committed to advocating for policies that protect our environment and prioritize the health and well-being of our families. As a mother of a child with asthma, the quality of the air we breathe is not just a policy issue—it is a daily concern that directly affects my child’s health and our family’s peace of mind.

In our neighborhood, many families are familiar with the sound of children struggling to breathe. The cumulative burden of pollution continues to impact our health and quality of life. SB781 represents an important step toward ensuring that the Maryland Department of the Environment considers the real impacts of pollution on communities that have been historically overburdened.

As both a Promotora of Environmental Justice and a mother, I urge you to support SB781 and take meaningful action to ensure cleaner air, healthier communities, and a more equitable future for all Maryland residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Clara Gonzalez