



CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & PROTECTION ADVISORY COUNCIL

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401-1912

RE: **SUPPORT Senate Bill 780/ House Bill 1287** Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act)

Dear Chair Feldman and Chair Korman:

The Maryland Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (CEHPAC) respectfully submits this letter of **SUPPORT for Senate Bill 780 and House Bill 1287 - Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act)**. This bill requires that an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for certain generating stations located within a certain at-risk census tract include with the application a baseline understanding of risk, disparities, and environmental needs (BURDEN) report describing and including information on certain environmental and public health burdens. Additionally, it requires the Public Service Commission to make certain determinations as to whether issuing a certain certificate of public convenience and necessity will cause or contribute to certain adverse environmental or public health stressors.

Established by the General Assembly, the purpose of CEHPAC is to identify environmental hazards that may affect children's health and recommend solutions to those hazards. CEHPAC supports the proposed legislation to the extent that it promotes positive health and environmental outcomes that in turn will include children. Children experience a disproportionate risk and greater risk than adults for exposure to and possible illness from environmental hazards. CEHPAC supports decreasing cumulative harms that impact the health of children in overburdened and underserved communities, moving towards:

- The lowest possible toxicity or hazard profile.
- The most favorable environmental profile (least possible persistence and/or environmental impact).
- The least total effect of multiple adverse experiences in their lives.

The CHERISH Act will also address the disproportionate environmental and public health harms that environmental justice communities in Maryland face from pollution generating facilities. For centuries, these facilities have been disproportionately and deliberately sited in marginalized and economically distressed communities in Maryland. Low-wealth, Black, and other communities of color in Maryland face greater cancer risks and exposure to air toxics due to higher pollution burden. Currently, many environmental permit applications do not take into consideration the cumulative impacts posed by multiple and historic sources of pollution. The CHERISH Act prioritizes Maryland residents' well-being, especially of our most vulnerable, and increases consideration of burden in decision-making processes.

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CEHPAC seeks to ensure that the rules, regulations, and standards of the State protect children from environmental hazards and enable children in Maryland to grow up in a safe and healthy environment. CEHPAC urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on this bill. CEHPAC looks forward to working with the General Assembly on this and other issues, and thanks you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Megan Weil Latshaw", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Megan Weil Latshaw, PhD MHS
Commission Member
Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council

Cc: CEHPAC Members