



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Bill Title: [SB0780](#) Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act)

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst on behalf of Progressive Maryland

Date: February 24, 2026

Greetings Chair Feldman and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

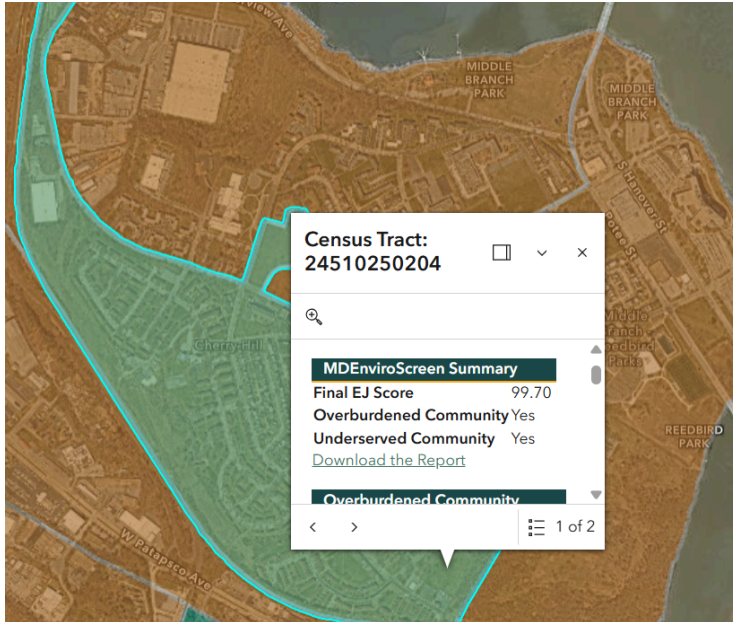
My name is Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst for Progressive Maryland, a member-led, power-building organization that advocates for working class people tackling a wide range of issues, including environmental justice. We have over 125,000 members spanning across Maryland with significant bases in Baltimore City, Prince George's, Montgomery, Frederick, and Harford counties, as well as the Eastern Shore. **Progressive Maryland is in strong support of SB780- Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act).**

This bill ensures that the state considers the environmental and health impact on communities living in close proximity to proposed energy generation facilities. From our work on the ground, we hear member stories everyday about the cumulative burdens imposed onto them by surrounding industries. To put this into perspective, the Baltimore City neighborhoods of Cherry Hill, Westport, and Brooklyn have overall Environmental Justice scores of 99.7,¹ 100,² and 98.4,³ respectively—some of the highest in the state of Maryland. This means that these communities have a higher pollution burden than at least 98% of other areas, clearly demonstrating the disproportionate environmental and health effects on these residents. Specifically, Cherry Hill has an EJ score of 95 for power plant proximity, indicating that it is placed in closer proximity to power plants than 95% of other areas in the state.

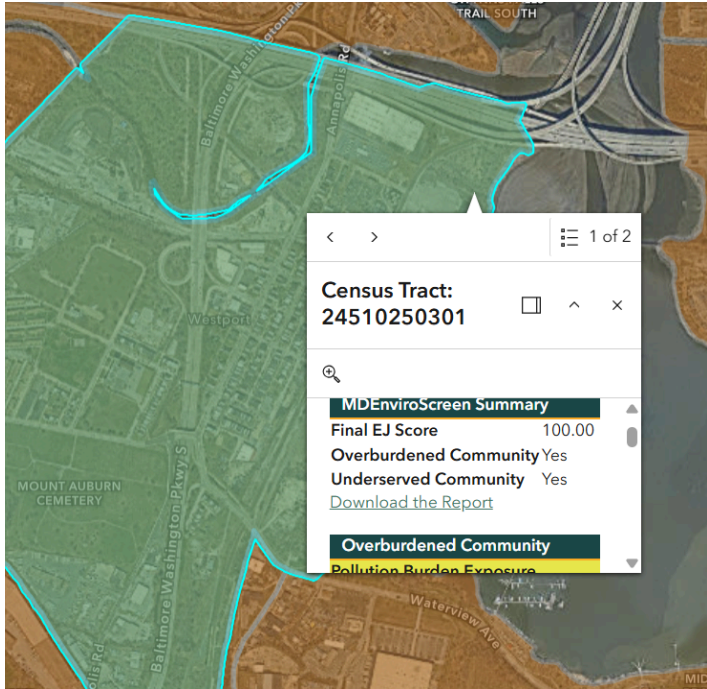
These are not mere datapoints—they are livelihoods and stories of real people. We personally have spoken with members who have developed cancer; whose entire families in their neighborhood block died of cancer; who were diagnosed with osteoporosis and other chronic diseases after continued exposure to the pollutants and toxic substances from surrounding facilities.

CPCNs are issued to public utilities for construction of infrastructure that is “essential” for the “public” good—it is only ethically and morally sound to then factor in the “public” perspective into these decisions. By “cherishing” our communities’ lived experiences, perspectives, and values, we can truly expect meaningful change with tangible and positive outcomes for Marylanders. **For these reasons, Progressive Maryland urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB780.**

¹EJ Score from Cherry Hill neighborhood in Baltimore City



²EJ Score from Westport neighborhood in Baltimore City



³EJ Score from Brooklyn neighborhood in Baltimore City

