

February 27, 2026

Testimony on: SB781 – CHERISH Our Communities Act

Submitting: Felicita Cano

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 3, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Felicita Cano, and I have been a resident of Baltimore City's District 46 for the past five years. I am a mother of four children—one of whom lives with asthma—and I am deeply committed to advocating for environmental justice and healthier communities.

As a mother, there is nothing more frightening than watching your child struggle to breathe. Asthma attacks are not just medical events; they are moments filled with fear and uncertainty. I constantly worry about the air my children are breathing—at home, at school, and in our neighborhood. In many parts of Baltimore, families like mine are exposed to pollution from highways, industrial facilities, and other sources that contribute to poor air quality and higher asthma rates.

For too long, communities like District 46 have faced the cumulative impacts of environmental hazards without meaningful protection. Our neighborhoods often carry multiple burdens at the same time—air pollution, traffic emissions, and industrial activity—while lacking the resources to address the health consequences. This is not just an environmental issue; it is a public health and equity issue.

The CHERISH Our Communities Act is an important step toward protecting families like mine. By requiring the state to consider cumulative impacts before approving new permits, this bill helps prevent further harm to communities that are already overburdened. It ensures that no neighborhood continues to be treated as a dumping ground for pollution.

Every child deserves to grow up breathing clean air. Every parent deserves peace of mind knowing their child's health is being protected. I respectfully urge you to give SB781 a favorable report and stand with families across Baltimore who are calling for fairness, accountability, and environmental justice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Felicita Cano