



Testimony Supporting SB0780
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 3, 2026

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action urges you to issue a favorable report on SB0780, the CHERISH Our Communities Act applying to Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity. This important legislation will provide important, targeted environmental health protections for the communities in Maryland most overburdened by pollution.

SB0780 is environmental justice legislation developed and driven by frontline communities in Maryland. This bill applies only to new or expanding polluting energy generation proposed to be sited in or near communities in Maryland already at risk from pollution according to data in the Maryland Department of the Environment's EnviroScreen tool. The bill will fill critical gaps in Maryland's current system of issuing Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity, ensuring that community health is put first in communities in Maryland currently experiencing environmental injustice.

This bill is both the result of years and decades of organizing and advocacy among communities in Maryland overburdened by pollution, and reflective of lessons learned from successful bills passed in states like New Jersey, Minnesota, and New York. Please issue a favorable report on SB0780 incorporating the amendments reflecting updated consensus so that communities on the front lines of pollution in Maryland can gain these critical protections.

Thank you,

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