



**SB 0780 - SUPPORT**

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**SB 0780**

**Environmental Permits - Requirements for Burden Analysis, Issuance and Renewal, and Public Participation (Cumulative Harms for Environmental Restoration for Improving Shared Health - CHERISH Our Communities Act)**

Education, Energy, and the Environment

March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

The Climate Communications Coalition is a Maryland-based grassroots climate and environmental justice non-profit, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition, and of the Maryland Climate Justice Wing, among others. The Climate Communications Coalition strongly supports SB 0780.

The CHERISH Act gives communities that have been overburdened by pollution a much-needed voice and safeguard against further injustice. Impacts from pollution cause cancer, respiratory and heart diseases, shorten lifespans, and can dramatically reduce quality of life.

The CHERISH Act will provide communities with an opportunity to comment when a new source of pollution applies to be located in their midst, and it empowers the Public Service Commission (PSC) to protect environmental justice communities based on specific geographic locations. The CHERISH principles will be applied to Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity, which are the permits needed by new or expanding power plants or other facilities putting energy onto the grid. Existing power plants that pollute must maintain an operating air pollution permit issued by MDE, also subject to this bill.

The CHERISH Act protects Maryland communities and the environment by incorporating cumulative impacts into the MDE and Public Service Commission permitting processes – a guardrail that has successfully been implemented in other states including New Jersey, Minnesota, and New York.

The Climate Communications Coalition respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 0780.

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