

February 27, 2026

**Testimony on:** SB781 – CHERISH Our Communities Act

**Submitting:** Roberto Lopez

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** March 3, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Roberto Lopez, I am 17 years old, and I am an 11th grade student at Fairmont Heights School. I live in the Hyattsville Area, in District 47. I am a part of the Youth Leadership Academy with CHISPA Maryland. I am writing to express my strong support for SB781 - CHERISH Our Communities Act because this legislation is critical to protecting the health and well-being of families like mine and communities across Maryland.

I am grateful for the opportunity to write in support of the CHERISH Our Communities Act. This legislation offers an opportunity to improve quality of life for many people. As a student, I understand how important clean air is. When air quality is poor and pollution is high, people are more likely to get sick and develop serious health problems.

Communities that are already overburdened by pollution should not continue to face additional harm from polluting industries. Stronger permitting standards can help protect these neighborhoods by ensuring pollution is carefully reviewed and by preventing further damage to public health. These protections are especially important for children, families, and pregnant individuals who are more vulnerable to environmental harm.

Now is the time to act. During this legislative session, you have the opportunity to make a real difference by supporting policies that create healthier living conditions for Maryland residents.

I respectfully urge you to support SB 781 so that all Maryland families, especially children, can grow up in safer and healthier environments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Roberto Lopez