

SB0781\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

03/03/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0781- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**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)**

**TO:** Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0781, **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)**

This bill is submitted to create environmental justice for all communities in Maryland. The American Public Health Association defines environmental justice as: <sup>1</sup>

Environmental justice is the idea that all people and communities have the right to live and thrive in safe, healthy environments with equal environmental protection and meaningful involvement in these actions.

The Environmental Law Clinic of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law report *Environmental Justice in Maryland* <sup>2</sup> documents the:

- Environmental Justice Background
- Maryland's Environmental Justice Efforts
- Environmental Justice Issues in Maryland
- Recommendations

We know of countless examples of the lack of environmental justice in South Baltimore (Curtis Bay/Fairfield) and in Brandywine (Prince George's County) among other communities that are specifically affecting minority populations. This bill enforces an analysis of environmental and public health burdens be included in the application and a determination if approval should be given or withheld by the Department of the Environment based on that reported information.

This bill will center environmental justice in decisions on any application by requiring an application for the issuance or renewal of a covered individual environmental permit for a site or facility located within an at-risk census tract after a certain date to include in the permit application a report describing the environmental and public health burdens in the at-risk census tract; requiring the Department of the Environment to issue a determination as to whether approving a covered individual environmental permit will cause or contribute to adverse environmental or public health stressors; etc.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0781, CHERISH Our Communities Act**

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/environmental-health/environmental-justice#:~:text=Environmental%20justice%20is%20a%20public,%2D%20Spanish%2C%202023%20\(PDF\)](https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/environmental-health/environmental-justice#:~:text=Environmental%20justice%20is%20a%20public,%2D%20Spanish%2C%202023%20(PDF))

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bdlaw.com/content/uploads/2019/04/fulltext.pdf>