

February 27, 2026

Testimony on: SB781 – CHERISH Our Communities Act

Submitting: Andy Dieguez

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 3, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Andy Dieguez, and I am an 8th-grade student at Hampstead Hill Academy. I live in Baltimore City with my family, including my younger brother Manny, who has asthma and autism. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB781 – the CHERISH Our Communities Act.

Many children in our community, including my brother, face serious health challenges because of poor air quality. Polluted air can trigger asthma attacks, worsen respiratory illnesses, and make daily life more difficult for families. Frontline communities like ours are often the most affected by environmental pollution, yet we receive the least protections and resources to address these issues.

The CHERISH Our Communities Act is an important step toward correcting these inequities. This bill ensures that the Maryland Department of the Environment considers the real impacts of pollution on communities that are overburdened and vulnerable. By supporting this legislation, decision-makers can help ensure that every child has the opportunity to live, learn, and grow in a safe and healthy environment.

I urge the committee to vote in favor of SB781. Passing this bill will protect the health of children and families across Baltimore City and create a cleaner, safer future for our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Andy Dieguez