



Senator Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 3, 2026

RE: SB 781 – UNFAVORABLE – 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)

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) represents approximately 110+ members, including 20 material producers, contractors, engineering firms, and associate members, supporting a 7,000-person workforce. MAA actively collaborates with regulatory agencies to advocate for the asphalt industry, ensuring fair regulations at both the state and federal levels. Additionally, we support adequate funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

Senate Bill 780 would reform the environmental permitting process in Maryland for various permits including mining operations and fuel facilities within at-risk census tracts. The bill requires a report on the existing and potential environmental impacts on the site with the permit application, which is used by the Department of Environment in determining whether to issue or renew a permit.

MAA respectfully opposes SB 781. While we share the goal of protecting environmental quality and community health, SB 781 creates significant new risks for Maryland companies seeking to maintain and renew the environmental permits necessary to continue lawful operations. The bill would require applicants in designated areas to prepare extensive "burden reports" analyzing cumulative environmental and public health impacts using broad and undefined criteria. These requirements represent a fundamental expansion of the permitting process, introducing substantial new costs, technical complexity, and uncertainty for both new permits and renewals. Businesses that have operated in compliance for years could face unpredictable outcomes based on subjective standards that lack clear regulatory thresholds.

Additionally, SB 781 expands public participation and judicial review in a way that may significantly lengthen permit timelines and increase litigation risk. For facilities such as asphalt plants and related infrastructure, environmental permits are essential to daily operations. Delays or denials jeopardize jobs, capital investment, and long-term planning. Maryland companies compete regionally, and layering additional permitting hurdles beyond existing federal and state requirements risks discouraging reinvestment and expansion within our State. For these reasons, the Association urges an unfavorable report on SB 781.

Sincerely,

Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association

