



HB 1268- SUPPORT

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HB1268

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)

Environment and Transportation

March 13, 2026

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

The Climate Communications Coalition is a non-profit Maryland-based grassroots climate and environmental justice organization, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition, and of the Maryland Climate Justice Wing, among others. The Climate Communications Coalition strongly supports HB 1268.

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 is seeking to be in their midst, and it empowers the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to protect environmental justice communities based on specific geographic locations. The CHERISH principles will only be applied to air pollution permits, and specific water and waste disposal permits, for new highly polluting facilities and the renewal of some existing facilities. CHERISH principles would also be considered when industry seeks a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

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 HB 1268 but rejects MACO's amendments.

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