



March 11, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman  
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251, Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: House Bill 1287 – Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – BURDEN Analysis (CHERISH Our Communities Act)**

Dear Chair Korman:

The Maryland State Council on Cancer Control (Council) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill 1287 (HB 1287), which would strengthen the review process for certain generating stations proposed in at-risk census tracts by requiring a baseline understanding of risk, disparities, and environmental needs (BURDEN) report and explicit consideration of cumulative environmental and public health stressors before the issuance of a certificate of public convenience and necessity.

HB 1287 represents an important step toward ensuring that decisions about large-scale energy infrastructure fully account for existing environmental health conditions in the communities where generating stations are proposed.

**Energy Infrastructure and Cancer Risk**

Generating stations—particularly fossil fuel–based facilities—can contribute to emissions of particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, hazardous air pollutants, and other contaminants associated with increased cancer risk and chronic disease. Communities located near power plants and major energy infrastructure often experience sustained exposure to air pollution over many years, compounding existing environmental and socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

HB 1287 requires that applications for certain generating stations located within at-risk census tracts include a BURDEN report evaluating existing environmental and public health burdens, as well as the projected contribution of the proposed generating station. By requiring analysis of environmental justice scores, ambient pollutant concentrations, traffic impacts, and other cumulative environmental stressors, the bill strengthens the Public Service Commission’s (PSC) ability to assess the full public health implications of energy siting decisions.

**Addressing Cumulative Impacts in At-Risk Communities**

Cancer disparities are influenced not only by access to screening and treatment, but also by long-term environmental exposures. Many communities identified as overburdened already experience elevated levels of air pollution, proximity to emitting power plants, and other industrial stressors.



HB 1287 appropriately requires the PSC to determine whether issuing a certificate of public convenience and necessity would, together with other environmental or public health stressors affecting an at-risk census tract, cause or contribute to adverse environmental or public health stressors that are higher than those borne by other areas within the State. This cumulative impact framework is consistent with modern environmental health science and with the Council's commitment to addressing upstream drivers of cancer disparities.

### **Advancing Equitable Energy Decision-Making**

Energy reliability and public convenience are critical considerations in infrastructure planning. HB 1287 ensures that public health equity is explicitly considered as part of that determination. By incorporating cumulative burden analysis into Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity review, the bill strengthens transparency, promotes informed decision-making, and helps protect communities already experiencing disproportionate environmental risks.

### **Aligning With Maryland's Comprehensive Cancer Control Priorities**

The Council supports policies that reduce modifiable cancer risk factors and address structural drivers of health inequities. Environmental conditions, including long-term exposure to air pollution from industrial and energy sources, are critical determinants of cancer risk. By strengthening health-based review standards for generating stations in at-risk census tracts, HB 1287 advances prevention-focused, equity-driven cancer control strategies in Maryland.

For these reasons, the Maryland State Council on Cancer Control supports HB 1287 and respectfully urges the House Environment and Transportation Committee to give the bill favorable consideration.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to public health and cancer prevention in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Taofeek Owonikoko".

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Taofeek Owonikoko, MD  
Chair  
Maryland State Council on Cancer Control