



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342  
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

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TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair  
Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: 03/10/2026

RE: 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)

### **The MLLC supports 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)**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB1268.

This legislation is critically important to Latino communities in Maryland, who face significantly disproportionate exposure to environmental pollution and its related health impacts. A study by Harvard University found that predominantly Latino communities experience air pollution levels 14% higher than White neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup> Latino communities are also more likely to be located near industrial facilities, manufacturing plants, major highways with diesel truck traffic, waste incinerators, and concentrated animal feeding operations. These cumulative exposures increase rates of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and cancer risk.

The real-world costs of inaction are measurable. In South Baltimore alone, just four pollutants from two waste incinerators cause \$97 million worth of health damages every year, and those two facilities are just two out of more than 70 polluters operating in the area. In Baltimore City, asthma rates are significantly above the national average and disproportionately affect children, people of color, and low-income residents, with 18.6% of children suffering from asthma compared to just 5 to 8% nationally, and asthma alone resulted in an estimated \$23 million in emergency room costs in 2019, with nearly 71% of those costs covered by public funds.

The CHERISH Act is necessary because it ensures that the environmental burden on overburdened communities is fully understood before environmental permits are granted. It strengthens transparency, improves public input, and prioritizes data-driven decision-making that centers on public health.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1268.

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<sup>1</sup> file:///C:/Users/latinocaucuss2/Downloads/s41586-021-04190-y%20(1).pdf