

House Bills 1268 and 1287 – SUPPORT

Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - Burden Analysis (HB 1268)

and

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))

House Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Steven B. Bergman, and I live on the Delmarva Peninsula on Maryland's Eastern Shore. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1268 and HB 1287, the CHERISH Our Communities Act.

Across Maryland, many communities continue to live with the accumulated effects of decades of industrial activity and environmental neglect. Areas such as northern Anne Arundel County and South Baltimore have experienced a long legacy of pollution sources including power generation facilities, industrial operations, waste incineration, contaminated dredge materials, and other industrial byproducts. While individual permits may comply with current regulations, the combined and cumulative effects of multiple pollution sources in the same geographic areas are often overlooked.

This cumulative burden has real consequences. Communities exposed to multiple pollutants face higher risks of respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, environmental degradation, and economic hardship. These impacts ripple through families, local businesses, healthcare systems, and property values, creating a cycle that disproportionately affects already vulnerable communities.

The CHERISH legislation represents a thoughtful and measured step toward addressing this problem. By requiring burden analysis and stronger public participation in environmental permitting, these bills modernize Maryland's regulatory framework and help ensure that future permitting decisions consider the total environmental load already borne by nearby residents. Just as importantly, the legislation gives communities that are directly affected by these decisions a meaningful voice in the process.

Maryland has long been a leader in environmental stewardship. Passing HB 1268 and HB 1287 would reaffirm that commitment by ensuring that environmental policy reflects not only technical compliance, but also fairness, public health, and long-term sustainability.

House Bills HB 1268 and HB 1287 proposed in this legislative session will create the necessary regulatory infrastructure to implement a measured and cost-effective approach to correcting the burden of cumulative pollution in Maryland's most overburdened communities and will give those communities a voice in the process.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB 1268 and HB 1287 without additional amendments.

Sincerely,

Steven B. Bergman

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