



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony prepared for the
Economic Matters Committee
&
Environment and Transportation Committee
on
House Bill 531
February 27, 2020
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of wise care of the blessings of the living environment. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We are a faith community of congregations in three ELCA synods, located in every part of the State.

Our community began its journey in care of creation in 1993 (“Caring for Creation,” ELCA) when we identified greenhouse gas emissions as an environmental threat.

We’ve supported expansion of renewables in Maryland’s energy portfolio since its deregulation experiment. Our intent was to advance our commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting environmental threat.

One consequence of dereg was increased demand on older generation sources and, therefore, greater greenhouse gas emissions to accommodate the demand.

Maryland has subsequently addressed demand management by expansion of renewables in its portfolio. Nevertheless, current and future demand is needed to finance new and different generation sources.

House Bill 531 attends supply/demand calculations with a requirement that the Department of Natural Resources research greenhouse gas emissions and climate effects from generation sources, following the State’s GHG goals. That analysis can then inform Public Service Commission considerations of public utility service and capacity.

It is our position that this is essential for appropriate cost-benefit considerations, in the interest of consumers and suppliers. Including environmental effects in PSC regulatory study and action may account for the cost of generation effects now simply elided onto public functions such as disaster relief, planning, charity, and the like. We support this expansion of energy market regulation, a creature after all, of public policy and investment.

Our faith community also supports fair labor practice and living wages for workers and we support that intent of HB 531 as well.

We ask your favorable report.

Thank you for this hearing.

Lee Hudson