



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 15, 2022

**HB 1033**

**Environment and Energy - Investment in Overburdened Communities**

**House Appropriations Committee  
House Economic Matters Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

House Bill 1033 would require the Department of the Environment, on or before December 1, 2022, to develop certain policies and recommendations to require at least 40% of overall spending on certain programs, projects, or investments to benefit certain overburdened communities, starting with fiscal year 2024; defining an "overburdened community" as any census tract where the median house hold income is not more than 75% of the statewide median household income and certain environmental indicators are above the 75th percentile.

The Conference supports environmental legislation that recognizes the integral ecosystem in which we live and promotes diversity and inclusion in pursuit of the common good. In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si’)*, Pope Francis states that “*We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.*”

*Laudato Si’* is not an endorsement of specific public policy proposals; rather, it seeks to illustrate the importance of protecting our common home and issue guidance as to how to listen to all voices in solving this massive global crisis. Pope Francis explains that “*The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet... The impact of present imbalances is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor.*”

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1033.