



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

**March 4, 2022**

**HB 708  
Comprehensive Climate Solutions**

**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 708 requires the State to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions through the use of various measures, including the alteration of statewide greenhouse gas emissions goals, the establishment of a net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions goal, requiring gas companies and electric companies to provide certain programs and services, and requiring electric companies to increase their annual incremental gross energy savings through certain programs and services

*In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si’)*, Pope Francis tells us, “When we speak of the ‘environment’, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behavior patterns, and the ways it grasps reality. Given the scale of change, it is no longer possible to find a specific, discrete answer for each part of the problem. It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. 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.”*

House Bill 708 aims to address the much needed reforms to energy consumption policies and standards to be set to sustain and achieve a healthy global ecosystem. We encourage discussion around the components and goals outlined in this legislation and pray they are a catalyst for meaningful ecological policy reform.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 708.