



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

Responding to the cry of the Earth
and the cry of the poor.

Hearing before the House Economic Matters Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 10, 2022

Statement of Support (FAVORABLE) of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on HB 108, Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based on, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation. MCCH is a voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics, but should be distinguished from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy interests of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

MCCH would like to express its strong support for passage of House Bill 108, Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing. As Catholics, we see a strong link between care for God's creation and concern for the poor, as both are an integral part of our faith. Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* draws specific links between the climate crisis and its effects on vulnerable populations, noting that "Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming" and that "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest."¹ We see these connections in Maryland, as well—as shown in a 2018 study that found that Baltimore residents "in the hottest parts of the city are more likely to be poor, to live shorter lives, and to experience higher rates of violent crime and unemployment."² The standards, programs, and resources that would be made available under the provisions of HB 108 will make a positive difference for low-income Marylanders. It will help them to achieve energy savings, to lower their energy costs, and to make their residences more resilient to the increased heat waves that climate models show will be the result of our past and projected emissions of greenhouse gases. We also applaud the provisions in HB 108 providing for fair worker pay, benefits, and training, which also align with Catholic social teaching.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on House Bill 108.

¹ *Laudato Si'*, no. 25 and 48, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

² Ian Round et al., "In urban heat islands, climate crisis hits harder," Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, University of Maryland, September 3, 2019, <https://cnsmaryland.org/interactives/summer-2019/code-red/neighborhood-heat-inequality.html>.