



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Economic Matters Committee
on
House Bill 169
March 2, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to support appropriate, affordable housing and an energy regime that helps care for creation. 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 with three judicatories in every part of our State.

We supported *House Bill 108* in the previous session because lowering energy consumption benefits the meta-goal of carbon-reduction in energy production. Years ago, Baltimore Gas and Electric testified in the Maryland General Assembly that loss of Maryland's robust efficiency programs contributed to spikes in utility costs as a result of the deregulation of its electricity market (MD Senate Finance, 2007). Price volatility was substituted for energy management.

At least one result was to offer up low- and moderate-income households to price shocks. Energy is essential for adequate housing, another concern of our community. We now have learned that lowering energy consumption lowers energy cost, across the system, and therefore makes adequate housing more affordable.

House Bill 169 would reduce greenhouse gas emissions *and* promote social equity by directing a greater proportion of EmPOWER resources to households priced out of efficiencies. Accessing Department of Housing and Community Development management of the State's low-income housing stock, **House Bill 169** will bring an underserved clientele of energy consumers into the project of energy efficiency. DHCD would be tasked with procuring, or providing, efficiency product and services in the next program cycle for the housing stock it manages.

We have long held that efficiency is a good way to achieve lower energy cost and carbon emissions reductions, goals that benefit the entire State. For those reasons, and because better housing equity may result, we support **House Bill 169** and urge a favorable report.

Lee Hudson