



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

## Testimony in Support

### HB 515 - Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act of 2024

To: Chair Wilson and the Members of the Economic Matters Committee and  
Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee  
From: Phil Webster, PhD  
Lead Advocate on Climate Change  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.  
Date: February 29, 2024

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **HB 515 - Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act of 2024** and urges a FAVORABLE report by the committee.

The UULM-MD is a statewide faith-based advocacy organization, with over 1,200 members, based on the Principles of Unitarian Universalism. Unitarian Universalists believe in *“justice and equity in human relations”* and *“respect for the interconnected web of all existence of which we are a part.”*

The Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (CCEJ) of 2024 meets several very important goals to protect Maryland from the ravages of climate change. Governor Moore has stated that Maryland needs \$1 BILLION per year for mitigation, adaptation and resilience programs.

The Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act would raise substantial funds from Carbon Polluters and direct the funds to addressing the Environmental Justice impacts that have already arisen in Maryland.

This bill establishes fees on fossil fuels at the point of entry into Maryland, and very importantly, the fees cannot be passed on to consumers. In effect, huge corporations that are responsible for carbon pollution would be required to pay for the climate impacts in Maryland.

The carbon fees are levied on Transportation and Non-Transportation uses, and each has a different starting rate, escalation rate and cap. The total raised is approximately \$18 BILLION over the life of this bill.

The CCEJ shall include policies to mitigate inequities that could arise from the implementation of the fee.

Two funds will be created with the revenue generated from the greenhouse gas pollution fees collected:

- **Household and Employer Benefit Fund**—Which will direct 50% of the revenue to protect low- and moderate-income households (LMI) and energy-intensive trade-exposed employers in the State from financial harm because of this policy;
- **Climate Crisis Infrastructure Fund**—Which will invest 50% of the funds in projects that are directly located within—and provide meaningful benefits to—environmental justice communities. This fund will also provide technical assistance, capacity, and planning tools to county and municipal governments to develop local Climate Action Plans and investment proposals. Due consideration would be given to counties and municipalities containing environmental justice populations.

We support this bill and urge a FAVORABLE report in committee.

*Phil Webster, PhD*

Lead Advocate, Climate Change UULM-MD