



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
on
Senate Bill 1023
March 4, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to support housing production with an energy regime that stewards 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 in every part of our State.

We have supported a variety of Maryland housing-related policies in prior MGA sessions to lower energy consumption and advance the meta-goal of decarbonized 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 after deregulation of its electricity market (MD Senate Finance, 2007). The wisdom of Maryland's efficiency policies is now obvious: system demand has been decreasing for years even as more customers are being served.

That last fact supports our community's advocacy of swift energy decarbonization, in Maryland and nationally (see "Earth's Climate Crisis", ELCA, April 2023). System capacity to absorb increasing demand in the electric energy sector has already been produced by application of efficiencies. We believe the ambition of **Senate Bill 1023** will be prospectively supported with assiduous exploitation of efficiency opportunities and technologies as an adjunct to transmission capacity increase.

Senate Bill 1023 will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and scale green energy production. It calls for the Maryland Department of Labor to adopt the International Building Code, to include the International 2 Energy Conservation Code, as Maryland Building Performance Standards. The codes make net-zero by 2035, established in the Climate Solutions Act of 2022, more likely.

This testimony does not rehearse the obligatory of an immediate decarbonization project: the fire, flood, and related natural catastrophes currently informing the world that more and worse is to come. We elide our objections to specious cost-benefit analyses about the price of decarbonization. It is impossible to stop burning carbon by allocating additional capital to burn carbon. That has become a commercial exercise in cost-shifting that transfers value from the public and the commons to private sectors.

Senate Bill 1023 will distinctly benefit the entire State; every resident, every energy consumer, every subdivision. For those reasons and in reverence for creation, we support **Senate Bill 1023** and urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson