



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0398

Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy (AACE) Act

Economic Matters Committee

FAVORABLE

TO: Del. C. T. Wilson, Chair; Del. Brian M. Crosby Vice-Chair; and the Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 4, 2025

The Episcopal Church believes that global climate change is not only a scientific concern or environmental issue, but what the United Nations calls "the defining issue of our time... at a defining moment" (UN Secretary General, September 10, 2018). We believe that clean, safe, and renewable energy is essential to preserve God's creation, and our Church has passed numerous resolutions in support of this, such as on fossil fuel non-proliferation and supporting a clean energy future. We acknowledge the need for nuclear energy as a supplemental and stable source while the supportive technologies for wind and solar energy are being further developed. And the Church is committed to environmental justice, with a specific concern for reducing economic impacts on lower-income communities.

We expect the energy policy debate to be fierce this session, as demand for energy soars, sparking higher energy costs and potential reliability issues. In our view, long-term reliance on fossil fuel sources is not an option. Maryland must find ways to incentivize both clean and reliable energy investments, particularly solar and wind, while protecting ratepayers.

We are convinced that the AACE Act addresses our concerns in the following ways:

- Improves incentives to generate, in state, the clean energy we need, thereby reducing our dependence on out-of-state dirty power, while creating local jobs;
- Ensures grid reliability by investing in battery storage capacity, as well as continuing support for the Calvert Cliffs nuclear facility in the interim; and
- Protects ratepayers by sharing profits from energy generation with customers, capping costs for clean energy programs, and using data center tax revenue to offset energy costs.

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland urges the House Economic Matters Committee to support the AACE Act and **requests a favorable report.**