



February 6, 2025

**HB398**

**Abundant Affordable Clean Energy - Procurement and Development (AACE Act)**

**Economics Matters Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 398**. The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 398**, also known as Abundant Affordable Clean Energy (AACE) Act will require electric companies in Maryland to develop and implement plans for constructing or procuring energy storage devices to enhance the distribution of clean energy. It also establishes a system for creating zero-emission credits from nuclear energy facilities and directs the Public Service Commission to coordinate offshore wind energy transmission efforts. This bill aims to advance the state's transition to reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy sources.

Catholic social teaching emphasizes the stewardship of creation and the moral duty to protect the environment for future generations. This legislation aligns with the Church's call to care for our common home by promoting sustainable energy solutions that reduce pollution and mitigate climate change. Supporting this bill reflects a commitment to social and economic justice, ensuring that all communities—especially the most vulnerable—have access to clean, affordable energy while safeguarding God's creation.

By investing in energy storage and renewable energy infrastructure, this legislation strengthens the reliability of Maryland's power grid, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, and promotes environmental sustainability. The expansion of clean energy sources like offshore wind and nuclear energy supports job creation, lowers long-term energy costs, and helps combat climate change. Communities benefit from improved air quality and a more resilient energy system that ensures affordability and accessibility.

The MCC appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a favorable report for **House Bill 398**.