



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT

SB0414

Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

Environment and Transportation Committee

3/31/2021

Good afternoon Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment & Transportation Committee. My name is Dick Williams. I am a representative of GreenGrace, the lay-led environmental ministry of the Maryland Episcopal Diocese. The Diocese represents 108 parishes and over 45,000 parishioners. The Maryland Episcopal Diocese supports SB0414.

SB0414 is legislation that we Marylanders must adopt to slow the climate crisis. Achieving net neutral Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2045 will go a fair way to alleviating Maryland coastal cities and towns from a fate similar to that of Avon, a coastal town on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Please see: March 14, 2021 headline in the *New York Times*: “Tiny Town, Big Decision: What Are We Willing to Pay to Fight the Rising Sea?”

That this bill will create a Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to make recommendations and set goals toward rectifying climate exposure in “overburdened” communities across the state is laudable. The Creation Care Vision of the Episcopal Church calls us to “stand with those most vulnerable to environmental degradation and climate change.”

SB0414 requires the planting and maintaining of five million native trees by 2030, including 500,000 in underserved urban areas; a needed ramping up of existing statute. The benefits of trees are well-established and include capturing and reducing carbon in the atmosphere, filtering polluted runoff, serving as wildlife habitats, and alleviating “urban heat islands”.

Finally, we support the workforce development and training for displaced fossil fuel workers that will help them qualify for available jobs in prosperous sectors of the economy.

GreenGrace and the Maryland Episcopal Diocese respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0414.