



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Education, Health and Environmental and Affairs Committee
on
House Bill 884
March 30, 2022
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for care of the gifts of 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 with three synods in every part of our State.

Our community addressed concern for a safe, healthy, flourishing environment to sustain life in "Caring for Creation" [ELCA, 1993 assembly]. Stewardship of natural resources and processes with conservation and preservation policies is wise, for it protects what is for the benefit of all things now living.

We communicated to DNR our concern about timbering an old growth forest patch in the Pocomoke State Forest over a year ago. Protecting such resources as a matter of State policy is obviously necessary. If logging State assets is not proscribed, obviously commercial pressures to do so will continue.

One particular and instructive interest in the Pocomoke incident illustrates the need to defend the web of life from degradation. There are entire migratory bird species that are biologically obligated to light for respite or nesting in dense timber stands such as old growth. Maryland's Eastern Shore is one of the most critical migratory flyways on the planet. There are additional ecological imperatives represented by these precious and irreplaceable resources. "Old growth" means you cannot compensate or substitute for its loss.

The environment is not a commodity. State holdings are public trusts, not commercial assets. Please give **House Bill 884** a favorable report.

Lee Hudson