



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 09, 2022

SB 14

**Sustainable Maryland Program Fund - Establishment**

**Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 14 establishes the Sustainable Maryland Program Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund to expand and enhance Sustainable Maryland's promotion and support of communities in Maryland in the effort to realize environmental, economic, and social sustainability; authorizing the Fund to be used for training and education, outreach and engagement, and developing and expanding the Sustainable Maryland program; requiring the Governor, for Fiscal Year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter, to provide an appropriation of \$750,000 to the Fund.

In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')*, Pope Francis tells us, *“Whenever these questions are raised, some react by accusing others of irrationally attempting to stand in the way of progress and human development. But we need to grow in the conviction that a decrease in the pace of production and consumption can at times give rise to another form of progress and development. Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term... We know how unsustainable is the behavior of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity. Senate Bill 14 aims to address some of the needed reform policies and standards to be set to sustain and achieve a healthy global ecosystem.*

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 14.