



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

SUPPORT

SB783

Constitutional Amendment-Environmental Rights
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Good Afternoon Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee , my name is Linda Boyd and today, I testify on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland that represents 108 parishes and over 45,000 parishioners stretching from Western Maryland to Calvert County. We support SB 783.

This Amendment would guarantee that every person in Maryland, every child of God, as a matter of basic human dignity, has a fundamental right to a healthy environment. This also requires that the State protect those rights and to put the health of its citizens first. This would assure that every Marylander who suffers from environmental degradation could challenge actions that create an unhealthy environment.

Communities of color and low-income neighborhoods bear the burden of environmental pollution and degradation and the resulting health disparities. In November 2021, the Maryland Episcopal Diocese overwhelmingly passed Resolution 2021-03 that supported the adoption of such an amendment. Caring for the health of our neighbors is a form of loving our neighbors as ourselves. It is a moral issue. that our State is not protecting the health of all of its residents but, rather, putting the interests of industry over the health of its citizens, especially low income and minority citizens. This amendment would legally protect their rights and all Marylanders' rights to live in a healthy environment. We respectfully request a favorable report.

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