



CENTRAL MARYLAND ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

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Dear Members of the Maryland State Assembly,

We are writing to you as members of the Ecumenical Leaders Group. The Ecumenical Leaders Group (ELG) is made up of the senior leaders (bishops and executives) of various Christian faith communities in Maryland – Episcopal, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and United Church of Christ.

Maryland faith communities have long been taking action to green our houses of worship as a way to care for our climate and our neighbors. As we've learned more about the impact burning methane gas and other fossil fuels in our buildings has on our health, our climate, and our neighbors who can least afford ever-increasing gas bills, we have started the work of turning away from burning—moving from burning fossil fuels in our buildings to instead choosing clean and affordable electric heat pumps, induction stoves, and heat pump water heaters. We call on our elected officials to join in this effort by passing the Energy Savings Act (HB 904, SB 689) and strengthening the EmPOWER Maryland program for all that has breath.

Dozens of faith communities across our region have documented the climate impacts of our leaky gas network and gas appliances. Using handheld methane leak detectors, faith communities have found hundreds of gas pipes leaking methane gas—a climate super-polluter—in the neighborhoods around their houses of worship.

Others have seen the health impacts of their gas stoves in real-time. Individuals in our congregations have tested for nitrogen oxide, one of the pollutants produced by gas stoves. They have found that their gas stoves are often polluting at 200-300% of EPA recommended limits. These dangerous levels of indoor air pollution are why some public health experts have compared having a gas stove to running an idling car in your house, and why [studies have shown](#) that children growing up in a home with a gas stove are 42% more likely to develop asthma symptoms.

For the health of our Common Home, we can strengthen the EmPOWER Maryland program and align it with our climate goals. For all that has breath, we can provide subsidies to help Marylanders choose cleaner, all-electric appliances that protect the lungs of our children and most vulnerable neighbors. And for Marylanders already struggling with high utility bills, we can ensure that they have access to all the federal and state funding available to help them lower their utility bills and choose more affordable electric appliances.

We can do all of these things by passing the Energy Savings Act.

Across Maryland, faith communities are starting the work of turning away from burning, choosing healthy and clean electric appliances over gas, oil, and propane. We call on you to join us by strengthening the EmPOWER Maryland program and passing HB 904 and SB 689 for all that has breath.

With Blessings,

The Ecumenical Leaders Group of Maryland

The Rev. William J. Gohl Jr.
Bishop
Delaware -Maryland Synod, ELCA
Chairperson ELG

Rev. Freeman L Palmer
Conference Minister
Central Atlantic Conference
United Church of Christ

Rev. Dellyne Hinton
President
Central MD Ecumenical Council

Rt. Reverend Eugene Taylor Sutton
Bishop of Maryland
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Most Rev. Denis J. Madden
Bishop
The Archdiocese of Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Jacqueline E. Taylor
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