



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

Testimony Prepared for the  
Finance Committee  
on  
**Senate Bill 144**  
January 31, 2023  
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for reintroducing this legislation in the 2023 Maryland General Assembly session; and thank-you to the Committee for this opportunity to support appropriate, affordable housing and an energy regime that helps care for 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 judicatories in every part of our State.

We supported Senate Bill 524 in the previous session because lowering energy consumption benefits the meta-goal of carbon-reduction in energy production. Years ago, Baltimore Gas and Electric testified in the Maryland General Assembly that loss of Maryland's robust efficiency programs contributed to spikes in utility costs as a result of the deregulation of its electricity market (MD Senate Finance, 2007). Price volatility was substituted for energy management.

At least one result was to offer up low- and moderate-income households to price shocks. Energy is essential for adequate housing, another concern of our community. We now have learned that lowering energy consumption lowers energy cost, across the system, and therefore makes adequate housing more affordable.

**Senate Bill 144** would reduce greenhouse gas emissions *and* promote social equity by directing a greater proportion of EmPOWER resources to households priced out of efficiency standards. Accessing Department of Housing and Community Development management of the State's low-income housing stock, **Senate Bill 144** will bring an underserved clientele of energy consumers into the project of energy efficiency. DHCD would be tasked with procuring, or providing, efficiency product and services in the next program cycle for the housing stock it manages.

We have long held that efficiency is a good way to achieve lower energy cost and carbon emissions reductions, goals that benefit the entire State. For those reasons, and because better housing equity may result, we support **Senate Bill 144** and urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson