



Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
March 29, 2023

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on
SB 224, Clean Trucks Act of 2023**

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based on, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation. MCCH is a voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics, but should be distinguished from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy interests of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

MCCH would like to express its strong support for passage of Senate Bill 224, the Clean Trucks Act of 2023. As Catholics, we see care for God’s creation and care for vulnerable groups in society as an integral part of our faith, as taught by recent Popes, including the forceful statements of Pope Francis. In his 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*,¹ Pope Francis specifically mentions that “Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths,” and identifies transport as one of the sources of this pollution (no. 20). Studies of the role of trucks (including both medium-duty vehicles [MDVs] and heavy-duty vehicles [HDVs]) in air pollution bear this out in two important ways. First, they show that while MDVs and HDVs are about 10 percent of the vehicles on the road, they disproportionately contribute to emissions: about 29 percent of transportation GHG emissions, 45 percent of on-road NO_x emissions, and 57 percent of direct PM_{2.5} (particulate matter ≤ 2.5 microns in diameter) emissions.² Second, because residential neighborhoods located near major highways and truck traffic are often poorer communities and communities of color, their residents bear a greater burden of these emissions and their health effects. We believe that addressing air pollution from MDVs and LDVs is responsive to Pope Francis’s call to “integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (no. 49).

Senate Bill 224 will require that the State of Maryland adopt regulations establishing requirements for the sale of new zero-emission MDVs and HDVs in the State by December 1, 2023, based on California’s standards for these vehicles. These regulations will address a key source of air pollution with disproportionate negative impacts on overburdened and vulnerable populations in our society.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 224.

¹ The English text of the encyclical, to which the paragraph numbers in the following parentheses refer, can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

² K. L. Fleming, et al., “Electrification of Medium- and Heavy-Duty Ground Transportation: Status Report,” *Curr Sustainable Renewable Energy Rep* 8, 180–188 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40518-021-00187-3>