



Hearing before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
March 7, 2023

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on
SB 781 – Offshore Wind Energy – State Goals and Procurement
(Promoting Offshore Wind Energy Resources Act)**

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—over 350 Maryland Catholics have already signed our statement of support for key environmental bills in this session of the General Assembly—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 781, Offshore Wind Energy – State Goals and Procurement (Promoting Offshore Wind Energy Resources Act). As Catholics and environmentalists, we are guided by the messages of Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*. There, Pope Francis cites the dangers of a throwaway culture and cites as an example our current industrial system:

But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them. A serious consideration of this issue would be one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet, but it must be said that only limited progress has been made in this regard.¹

Further, Pope Francis stresses that:

There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy.²

Wind energy provided slightly more than one-tenth of Maryland’s renewable electricity generation in 2021.³ There is room to expand. The resources that would be made available under the provisions of Senate Bill 781 heeds the Pope’s message to respond to the result of a throwaway culture as well as create clean energy. The thoroughness of the provisions of Senate Bill 781 is notable, as it will create (among other objectives) a comprehensive evaluation of future permits to meet the State’s net-zero greenhouse gas emissions targets, which will include community engagement and access to small, minority, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses, all with the aim to create a clean energy industry that will benefit all Marylanders.

It is for these reasons that MCCH strongly supports Senate Bill 781. Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 781.

¹ *Laudato Si’*, no. 22.

² *Laudato Si’*, no. 26.

³ U.S. Energy Information Administration, Electricity Data Browser, Maryland, Net generation for all sectors (thousand megawatt hours), annual, 2001-21.