



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 0840

Climate, Labor, and Environmental Equity Act

****FAVORABLE****

March 8, 2022

TO: Hon. Kumar Barve, Chair, Hon. Dana Stein, Vice Chair and the members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Albert H Todd, Member, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

DATE: March 6, 2023

For decades, Maryland state agencies have allowed companies and others to build major industrial projects without consideration of other projects nearby, which can result in a concentration of pollution and increased impact on communities. Further, these facilities are more often than not, concentrated in or near low-wealth communities and communities of color.

The Climate Equity Labor Act would provide further scrutiny of permits for projects that have a high climate impact and are proposed to be built near communities that already have a high burden of pollution and adverse health outcomes. It will enable key state agencies, like the Maryland Department of Environment, to fully assess the health and environmental impacts of such projects on marginalized communities

Caring for the “least of these” is a key tenet of the Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus. When it comes to environmental damage and pollution, attention to environmental justice is essential in ensuring that those least able to speak up or litigate are given equal ability to protect themselves from pollution. Communication among the stakeholders in the permitting process and allowing people to receive regular notifications regarding environmental permits that may have a negative impact on their health and well-being are benefits of this legislation.

This legislation also provides for a missing piece in Maryland’s climate strategy by ensuring that key state agencies in Maryland are held accountable (through reporting) to the state’s climate, environmental justice, and labor goals.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal
Public Policy
Network

The Episcopal Church at large and the Diocese of Maryland in particular embrace creation care and environmental justice and equity. We believe we have a sacred moral obligation to care for the creation God has given us. We recognize that the love and care we give to the environment that sustains us is a direct reflection of our love and care for each other

The Diocese of Maryland supports a favorable outcome for Climate and environmental equity.