



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Environment and Transportation Committee
on
House Bill 723
March 1, 2023
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for care of the gifts of 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 in three judicatories across our State.

We teach that care of creation is an act of devotion and gratitude for the benediction of natural gifts. A consequence of thanksgiving, we believe responsible stewardship of natural gifts is an ethical mandate. We are called to preserve what is, conserve what is needed, and restore what has been spoiled.

Forest integrity and extent in Maryland was a stated interest of our community in 2008 (LOPP/MD testimony before *EHEA*, Feb. 28, 2008 on *SB431*). The environment is a public good that must be protected in all its public spaces.

House Bill 723 improves present Maryland care of its natural gifts. It strengthens the work of preservation by gathering more trees into the regulatory definition of “forests” and increasing conserved acreage. The benefits of better policy will accrue to the entire land labeled “Maryland;” its air, watersheds, soils, and species including the human one.

We support such a policy. We support care and preservation of created gifts. We support a favorable report.

Lee Hudson