



Hearing before the House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 2, 2023

**Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home on
HB 9, Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses**

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 House Bill 9, Equity in Transportation Sector - Guidelines and Analyses. 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*,* Pope Francis specifically mentions how "the quality of life in cities has much to do with systems of transport" that are often inadequate and serve as "a source of much suffering for those who use them." (p. 153) The provisions of House Bill 9 that introduce the analyses of disparate impact and disproportionate burden into Maryland's transportation planning and management are responsive to this insight, as well as to Pope Francis's concern that "substantial improvements" need to be made in transportation systems, "which in many cities force people to put up with undignified conditions due to crowding, inconvenience, infrequent service and lack of safety." (p. 153)

The analyses and consultations that will be required under the provisions of House Bill 9 are 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" (p. 49). The bill ensures that the concerns of our fellow citizens who are especially dependent on public transportation (i.e., members of racial minority communities, low-income communities, disabled riders, riders with limited English proficiency, transit-reliant riders, and senior riders) are integrated into major decisions on transportation systems and services. These changes will increase the ability of Maryland's transportation system to serve all Marylanders in accord with their fundamental God-given dignity.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a **favorable** report on House Bill 9.

* 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.