



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

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**  
on  
**Senate Bill 96**  
March 5, 2024  
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for a human right that attends 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 with three synods in every part of our State.

Our community addressed concern for a safe, healthy environment that can sustain life in “Caring for Creation” (ELCA, 1993). Among perspectives articulated in that statement is stewardship of natural resources and processes as a matter for human ethics.

Universality, like human activity, comes with a consequence. Because communities of faith worship a Maker, they approach providence with reverence and gratitude, in solidarity with all living things. With created gifts the holiness of life, time and human experience are glimpsed. We are not merely all in this together; we are all *of this*, together.

Maryland’s General Assembly adopted an Environmental Policy Act in 1973. Among its commitments, *each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment*. We cannot say it any better.

**Senate Bill 96** would clarify consequences for climate stability and healthy living from certain public actions in permitting processes. It will bring Maryland process into alignment with current EPA environmental justice requirements and facilitate achieving ambitions of the Climate Solutions Act of 2022. Among its most significant justice improvements is the requirement that communities to be affected by permitting be notified—included, hopefully—in the process. It has become something like public policy that communities already accommodating facilities with deleterious human health and safety effects receive additional dangers and threats. Injustice should not be addressed by compounding it.

We support **Senate Bill 96** and urge your favorable report.

Lee Hudson