



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

Testimony prepared for the  
**Environment and Transportation Committee**  
on  
**House Bill 233**  
February 7, 2024  
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to urge a public commitment that addresses climate disaster and its companion, environmental (in)justice. 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 ELCA synods in every part of our State.

The ELCA identified greenhouse gases as environmental threats to earth's climate in 1993 ("Caring for Creation," ELCA 1993 assembly). We have now added justice, investment, and urgency to our call for public policy action on the "Climate Crisis", becoming "climate catastrophe" as revealed by recent episodes of fire and flood in the United States and North America ("Earth's Climate Crisis", ELCA social message, April 2023).

**House Bill 233** updates Maryland's landmark Critical Area goals to include resilience, justice, and equity considerations when regulating human activity in the State's critical areas. Critical areas, by geographic demarcation, are places currently being regularly inundated and at risk for calamitous flooding.

The bill also requires critical area mapping to be updated more frequently because emerging crises are more numerous and catastrophic than current planning cycles can capture. We urge a favorable report on this modest adjustment to current law.

Lee Hudson