



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

Testimony prepared for the
Environment and Transportation Committee
on
House Bill 3
January 30, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for affordable housing production in our State. 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 Maryland.

The lack of affordable housing everywhere in our nation is well documented. Our faith community has represented its concerns about that previously to many sessions of the Maryland General Assembly.

Among the reasons housing that is affordable for so many is the processes required for housing construction projects, often appropriately. As a community of interest we do not advocate that our universe of not-for-profits should be exempt from necessary processes to protect the public and public contexts from hazard or compromise. Safety and social fabric are values that benefit all.

However, when appropriate, accommodations in process that facilitate the production of affordable housing should be considered. When I was in service in a parish in the Canton community of Baltimore City, we initiated a project to repurpose an under-utilized church facility for senior housing when that was a community scarcity. Owing mostly to the financing options available, and with participation by Maryland DHCD at the time, the project took years to complete. (It has been successful since; jubileebaltimore.org/project/messiah-hall-senior-housing.)

If reasonable accommodation for not-for-profit housing projects that can maintain both public interest and safety are available—understanding that “not-for-profit” is both a value and a cost in financing—my community supports **House Bill 3**. It may bring more affordable housing to market from existing property across the State landscape. We encourage your consideration and support.

Lee Hudson