



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 149
February 13, 2025
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about stewardship in the natural world. 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 of congregations in three ELCA synods, located in every part of the State.

Our community named greenhouse gas emissions an environmental threat to the natural world in 1993. Despite rhetoric in public discourse, time has validated that assertion. It no longer matters what is thought and said about a climate crisis. Earth's atmosphere is dictating the vocabulary. If what we value is what we spend money to buy, it's gotten very expensive to live in our settled communities and built contexts.

It's gotten very expensive to live in a changing climate. Private enterprises *and* public institutions *are* calculating the costs of fire storms, inundation, infrastructure repair and hardening, health and safety, in their forward-facing finances.

Thus, private profit from carbon energy is a publicly subsidized product. Costs from burning stuff has been shifted onto the public. It is appropriated to other commercial interests, public and private institutions, indemnity products, and of course, people living in the carbonized context.

As one energy production regime is subsidized by Maryland subdivisions and each of their legislative precinct voters, other production sources have been held out of the energy sector by public policy and its actors. Voters are recognizing what their dollars are buying: more of the same. "Voters" are placeholders for people living in the climate catastrophe this energy regime produces.

The cost of the climate crisis exceeds the cost of carbon-neutrality and has for some time. It is meet and right to allocate some of this cost at its source to balance that equation. **Senate Bill 149** weighs the calculation with a measure of past emissions from the largest for-profit operations and collects a resource fund to help pay for damage now, and risk still to be apportioned to the public year-on-year as far forward as anyone can calculate.

Earth's atmosphere is going to make paying for this crisis one way or another mandatory. We may as well begin resourcing public relief now for damage being done. We continue to urge reductions of current GHG emissions. Seawalls, dredge-fill islands, flood and fire insurances, and treatments of hidden health conditions within demographic cohorts, are necessary, but insufficient if we keep burning stuff. We ought to incentivize GHG reductions. We ought, at least, to capture some resource to pay for what is happening. Our community urges your favorable report.

Lee Hudson