



**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 978**  
February 25, 2025  
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify for a human right to attend to just stewardship 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 judicatories 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 matters for human ethics.

Universality presents as consequences. Because communities of faith worship a Maker, they approach providence with reverence and gratitude, in solidarity with all living things. Created gifts are a glimpse of holiness in life, time, and human experience. 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 is, *each person has a fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment*. Our understanding from the tradition of our faith says the same.

**Senate Bill 978** would make consequences for a healthy environment a required consideration by certain public permitting procedures. Among its justice advances is a requirement that communities to which adverse effects are being assigned be included in the process. It has become something like public policy that communities already accommodating facilities and systems resulting in poor human health and safety should accept additional dangers and threats.

Injustice isn’t addressed by making it worse. We therefore support **Senate Bill 978** and implore the Committee’s favorable report.

Lee Hudson