



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

Testimony Prepared for the
Environment and Transportation Committee
on
House Bill 4
January 24, 2025
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to support a cleaner energy future in Maryland by facilitating renewables in its production regime. 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 within three judicatories across our State.

My community publicly supported a cleaner energy future in its 1993 statement on the environment, "Caring for Creation". We are called to advocate for reductions of current and future greenhouse gas emissions through public policies that influence energy demand and consumption.

The *2022 Maryland Climate Solutions Act* committed Maryland's public decision-making to implement an energy transition, and we enthusiastically endorsed it. Increasing clean electric energy production is good policy to achieve that goal. And getting more power from the sun is feasible and increasingly popular indicated by growing consumer interest in residential solar.

A similar *House Bill 639* passed with considerable support in the Maryland House during the 2023 session. (It was not voted out of Judicial Proceedings before the end of that session.) **House Bill 4** proposes the same clarification of "significant" in current law for solar installations to mean a restriction that causes project cost to exceed 5% of an original proposal, *or* loss of efficiency greater than 10% of an original design. Current law says an unreasonable restriction is one that "significantly" increases the cost or reduces the efficiency. Policy details such as this affect policy effectiveness.

We understand that achieving cleaner energy goals requires scaling. As we have noted in various written testimony over decades, policies that are barriers to scaling green energy advance dirty energy. They favor the few by badly serving the whole with risk from climate catastrophe and its multitude costs. We will continue to urge policies that facilitate as rapid a transition to cleaner energy as possible, here in Maryland and nationally.

House Bill 4 is mere clarification and merits your favorable report. Thank you for hearing this bill again.

Lee Hudson