



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 17th 2026

HB647

**Power Plant Research Program - Study on Nuclear Energy
Environment and Transportation Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 647**. **The Maryland** Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 647 conducts a comprehensive study on nuclear energy and evaluates its potential role as a renewable, reliable, and emissions-free energy resource for the State of Maryland. The bill requires the Program to examine modern nuclear technologies—including newer innovations such as small modular reactors—and report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by September 30, 2027. Importantly, this bill does not authorize the creation or expansion of nuclear facilities; it simply mandates research and objective assessment so that Maryland has accurate data to inform future decisions.

By studying nuclear energy, the State can determine whether it may support emissions reduction targets, strengthen grid reliability as renewable energy sources expand, and provide a stable, clean baseload power source. This study will also allow Maryland to weigh safety considerations, technological readiness, and economic feasibility so policymakers can proceed with clarity rather than speculation. A well-informed assessment can help identify opportunities for job creation, workforce development, and economic diversification within Maryland's energy sector. Nuclear energy also has the potential to provide long-term cost stability for families, especially low-income households disproportionately burdened by rising utility prices. Understanding nuclear energy's environmental impact and its ability to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions supports healthier communities statewide, particularly for children, seniors, and vulnerable populations affected by pollution.

House Bill 647 aligns with our shared moral responsibility to care for creation, uplift the common good, and practice prudent stewardship. Access to clean, reliable, and affordable energy is essential for human dignity and the flourishing of families. Conducting this study allows Maryland to discern responsibly—grounded in truth, science, and ethical concern—whether nuclear energy can help safeguard the environment while providing stable energy for all communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 647**.