

## **Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Environmental Justice Ministry (EJM)**

January 19, 2021

### **Position: Favorable**

The Environmental Justice Ministry of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church supports the **Public Service Commission Climate and Labor Test: The Consideration of Climate and Labor Act (HB0298/SB0083)**. Our faith respects the interdependent web of life of which humanity and nature are a part. We also believe in the science of climate change's risks.

Recognizing climate change and its concomitant oppressions as the most dire and greatest threat our planet has ever faced, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned us several years ago that, if we did not immediately deal with this situation, we faced **“rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented change in all aspects of society.”** **We have not acted on this warning with appropriate urgency. Now we have less than ten (10) years to address all the interlocking, systemic problems of this existential threat to civilization as we know it!**

The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates energy supply in the state by approving facilities that supply electricity and overseeing the gas industry. The PSC and its staff have publicly stated that its governing

statute doesn't, either specifically or generally require consideration of climate change. The commission has never, and apparently, does not ever intend to require any deliberation of the effects of climate change in any of its proceedings.

Therefore, this legislation is now essential to Maryland's regulation, control, and elimination of greenhouse gases. This bill requires the PSC to:

- consider climate change based on the best available scientific information available as recognized by the IPCC when it makes decisions regulating the electric utilities in the state.
- This will help Maryland meet its promised greenhouse gas reduction goals as codified in the **Greenhouse Reduction Act and the Clean Energy Jobs Act**.
- Further, this legislation will specifically require the PSC and appropriate state agencies to consider climate impacts when reviewing applications for new electricity generating facilities and when it approves sites for new facilities.
- Since the PSC oversees the gas industry, this bill will facilitate Maryland's transition off reliance on gas and coal fired plants onto renewables such as solar and wind.

- **It is vital that we realize that gas is NOT a bridge fuel as it's primary component is Methane which is an extremely dangerous greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide! Not depending on gas will greatly assist the state's movement to a clean air economy.**

Choices made now are critical to our future. The Environmental Justice Ministry **urges you to find this bill favorable.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Nanci Wilkinson

Lee McNair

Environmental Justice Ministry of the Cedar Lane

Unitarian Universalist Church