



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

Responding to the cry of the Earth
and the cry of the poor.

Statement of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home in Support of SB414: the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021

March 31, 2020

Chairman Barve, Vice-Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee:

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in both the Archdiocese of Baltimore and the Archdiocese of Washington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based on, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation. MCCH is a voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics, but should be distinguished from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy interests of the bishops who lead the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

As a grassroots organization of Maryland Catholics, MCCH would like to voice a strong endorsement of HB583 and SB414: the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021. We are pleased that the Maryland Senate has passed SB414 and that it is now pending in the House of Delegates.

As Catholics, we see care for God's creation as an integral part of our faith, as taught by recent Popes, including the forceful statements of Pope Francis. This teaching and our belief place care for creation within the broader fabric of social justice. That comprehensive approach includes priority for the concerns of the poor and their communities—which are often overburdened with pollution and environmentally hazardous facilities.

We are pleased to note that the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 embodies this broad moral vision. Its praiseworthy elements include the following provisions:

- The bill changes Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction requirements to more ambitious goals.
- It provides several low-cost mitigation policies to reduce pollution impacts, including tree plantings in underserved urban areas and bus electrification.
- It calls on the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to determine the percentage of state funds spent on climate change that must go to environmental justice communities.
- It creates a work group to protect impacted workers.

The bill's focus on more urgent and comprehensive action to address the climate crisis is consistent with Pope Francis's stated view that this crisis constitutes an emergency. Its focus on action that will benefit Maryland's low-wealth communities and communities of color is an appropriate response to the disproportionate impacts of pollution and climate change on these communities.

For these reasons, MCCH strongly urges a favorable report without amendment on the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2021 (SB414) by the Environment and Transportation Committee and passage by the House of Delegates during the 2021 session of the General Assembly. Thank you for considering our views.