



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

March 09, 2022

HB 1263

Environment – Office on Climate Change – Establishment

House Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch) dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 1263 establishes the Office on Climate Change (OCC) within the Office of the Governor. The purpose of OCC is to (1) facilitate the implementation of the Maryland Department of the Environment’s (MDE) Maryland Commission on Climate Change’s (MCCC) recommendations; (2) ensure that each State agency considers and addresses climate change as it relates to the agency and its operations; (3) initiate and oversee, as necessary, climate change research and investigations, as specified; (4) assist local governments in the development of local climate change plans; and (5) report annually to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding the State’s efforts to mitigate the causes of, prepare for, and adapt to the consequences of climate change.

The Conference supports environmental legislation that recognizes the integral ecosystem in which we live. In his encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si’)*, Pope Francis states that, “*What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal.*”

Laudato Si’ is not an endorsement of specific public policy proposals; rather, it seeks to illustrate the importance of protecting our common home and issue guidance as to how to listen to all voices in solving this massive global crisis. Pope Francis explains that “[t]o take up these responsibilities and the costs they entail, politicians will inevitably clash with the mindset of short-term gain and results which dominates present-day economics and politics. But if they are courageous, they will attest to their God-given dignity and leave behind a testimony of selfless responsibility.”

House Bill 1263 aims to address some of the needed reforms policies and standards to be set to sustain and achieve a healthy global ecosystem. We encourage discussion around the components and goals outlined in this legislation and hope they are a catalyst for meaningful ecological policy reform.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1263.