



*Forming Faithful Stewards,  
Caring for Sacred Waters*

PO Box 6791  
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 1, 2024

Chairman Marc Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen St.  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**House Bill 1101 – Clean Water Justice Act**

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Korman and Committee Members:

The undersigned groups representing diverse communities of faith in Maryland testify our **support of House Bill 1101**, the Impact of Environmental Permits and State Agency Actions bill.

**Water is life.** In all religions, water is central to sacred rituals and symbolic of renewal and interconnectedness. Waters of the Chesapeake -- including the rivers and streams in our communities -- are sacred, too. They are central to our communities, provide recreation, are relied upon for sustenance by some of our poorest neighbors, and are habitat for countless species and aquatic plants. We have a moral and spiritual responsibility to care for these waters and ensure future generations can likewise reflect on the beauty and sacredness of these waters.

**Following the disastrous Sackett vs EPA decision, it is now up to Maryland to protect these sacred waters for future generations.** The US Supreme Court removed countless streams and wetlands from federal Clean Water Act protections, eliminating communities' rights to enforce protections. While Maryland has protections in place for these waters, it does not have a process for communities to demand proper enforcement of these protections. Communities know what is happening in their waters and need the right to advocate for themselves legally in order to protect the waters we all share. **Local citizens have always been the best watchdogs and House Bill 1101 ensures they have the right to do just that.**

**No water body is insignificant and no ecosystem is unnecessary.** As people of faith, this is our call to action: we have a moral responsibility to protect and restore the natural resources that are meant to be shared across generations. House Bill 1101 closes loopholes that expose some water bodies to vulnerability. Some of the most important enforcement actions to protect local water bodies have come about because small citizen groups fought for them. **Let's not continue to hold out for those David-and-Goliath stories; let's level the playing field so that all communities can demand clean water.**

**IPC urges your FAVORABLE support of House Bill 1101** to respond to this new, dark, post-Sackett reality in which we find ourselves. Maryland deserves better than what the US Supreme Court deemed necessary.

Sincerely,



Jodi Rose

Executive Director

**Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake**

PO Box 6791

7 Willow Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Annapolis, MD 21401