

230+ Maryland Faith Leaders to Annapolis:

**Our communities pay for dirty energy
with our health and a damaged climate.**

Double clean energy in Maryland.

**IN AN UNPRECEDENTED SHOW OF ECUMENICAL RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP
ON A STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE, 7 MARYLAND BISHOPS RALLY FAITH SUPPORT FOR
THE MARYLAND CLEAN ENERGY ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2015 (HB 377/SB 373).**

Annapolis, MD – As the Maryland Senate’s Finance Committee prepares to take up legislation to double the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard this afternoon, legislators on two key committees were delivered a letter signed by over 230 religious leaders, including 7 bishops and ecumenical leaders, making a moral case for shifting the state to cleaner energy.

Full text of the letter and list of signatories below.

The letter was delivered in Annapolis to members of both the House Economic Matters and Senate Finance Committees. Many of the clergy signers are also calling the legislators’ offices to deliver their message. **Rev. Delyne Hinton** (Gwynn Oak United Methodist Church and Central Maryland Ecumenical Council) testified in the House Economic Matters Committee on Friday, and today, **Bishop Wolfgang Herz-Lane** (DE-MD Synod, ELCA and Ecumenical Leaders’ Group of Maryland) and **Rev. Darriel Harris** (Baltimore Food & Faith Project at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future) will testify in the Senate Finance Committee on behalf of the Maryland Clean Energy Advancement Act. Last night, **Rev. Stephen A. Tillett** (Asbury Broadneck United Methodist Church) addressed a rally for supporters of the bill in Annapolis.

These faith leaders are asking their leaders in Annapolis to recognize energy policy as of particular concern to their communities.

“Caring for God’s creation – including all its inhabitants – means slowing and limiting our use of fossil fuels and significantly reducing our climate pollution,” the letter states. “In order to fulfill that moral imperative, we, the leaders of Maryland’s religious communities, **challenge ourselves**, our denominational institutions, our congregations collectively and their members individually, fellow people of faith, **and all people of good will** to take action on climate change by choosing renewable energy sources (such as solar, wind and geothermal), specifically, **to move to 40% renewable energy usage by 2025.**”

The clergy who joined this effort reflect Maryland’s religious and cultural diversity. Doubling Maryland’s renewable energy has support from leaders in the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Baha’i, Buddhist, and Unitarian Universalist traditions. The signatories hail from all corners of Maryland.

These clergy from diverse faith traditions and all across the state are responding to a call initiated by the Ecumenical Leaders’ Group, a committee of seven leaders of Christian denominations in Central Maryland. This marks the first time that this group of senior religious leaders have spoken out together on a matter of environmental concern.

Full text of letter and list of signatories below.

The **Ecumenical Leaders' Group** is made of the bishops, presidents, executives of Christian denominations in Maryland called together by the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council. The ELG meets five times a year and addresses, with one voice, larger justice issues.

The letter effort was convened by **Interfaith Power & Light (MD.DC.NoVA)**, which works with hundreds of congregations of all faiths across the DC metro area to save energy, go green, and respond to climate change: www.gwipl.org.

Joelle Novey, 202-256-1450

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Tuesday, February 24, 2015

Dear Maryland General Assembly,

We are religious leaders from congregations and denominations across Maryland who have joined together to restore the health of creation. While this will take many paths, we begin by challenging ourselves and asking you to join us in doubling the amount of renewable energy that powers our state.

Like all people everywhere, we live from and rely on the health and wellbeing of God's creation – air, water and land, wildlife and domestic animals, local ecosystems, biomes, and the great interconnected ecosystem that the whole Earth shares.

Heat-trapping pollution like carbon dioxide and methane, released into the air by humans at unprecedented levels over the last hundred and fifty years, has damaged and endangered the stability of our climate, made our oceans more acidic, and is threatening global health and security.

Climate change will harm our neighbors in Maryland. In Maryland, we see the impacts of our reliance on fossil fuels in many places. Our traditions teach that we are responsible for the most vulnerable people in our communities, and environmental degradation harms the poor in particular, and makes many sick: older adults face lung problems, young people deal with asthma, and disenfranchised people of all ages are subjected to pollution in their communities. We see the impacts of hurricanes and other disasters made worse by climate change. As leaders in a state with 3,190 miles of coastline, we see how many natural and human treasures rising ocean levels will destroy.

Caring for God's creation – including all its inhabitants – means slowing and limiting our use of fossil fuels and significantly reducing our climate pollution. In order to fulfill that moral imperative, we, the leaders of Maryland's religious communities, challenge ourselves, our denominational institutions, our congregations collectively and their members individually, fellow people of faith, and all people of good will to take action on climate change by choosing renewable energy sources (such as solar, wind and geothermal), specifically, **to move to 40% renewable energy usage by 2025.**

As we educate and motivate our institutions, our congregations and their members to make this shift, we call on you in the Maryland General Assembly to double Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standard to meet this challenge as well.

We believe that caring for God's creation is the great moral challenge of our time, and that the survival and flourishing of all people depends on our ability to move from temporary and destructive energy sources to renewable energy sources.

Today, we renew our commitment to stewardship and care for all of God's creation, and we challenge you to do the same.

With blessing,

[Signed by 231 Maryland religious leaders of five faith traditions]

The Reverend Wolfgang Herz-Lane
Bishop, Delaware–Maryland Synod (ELCA),
President, Ecumenical Leaders Group of Maryland

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Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference,
United Church of Christ

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President, the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance

The Most Rev. Denis J. Madden
Auxiliary Bishop, the Archdiocese of Baltimore

Rev. Dr. Marcus Matthews
Bishop, Baltimore Washington Conf. United Methodist Church

Reverend Craig Palmer
Transitional General Presbyter, Presbytery of Baltimore
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Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

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Potomac

Rev. Sheridan Allmond
Hopkins United Methodist Church *
Baltimore City

Rev. Stephen Anderson
Christ Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) *
Silver Spring

Rev. Dr. Rob Apgar-Taylor
Grace United Church of Christ *
Veritas United Church of Christ *
Frederick, Hagerstown

Rev. Melinda Artman
St. John's Episcopal Church *
Ellicott City

Rev. Kip Banks
East Washington Heights Baptist Church *
Upper Marlboro

Rev. Eugene P. Bartell
St. Matthew United Church of Christ *
Baltimore City

Rev. Patricia Barth
St. Mary's United Church of Christ *
Westminster

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Montgomery County

Rabbi Emeritus Donald Berlin
Temple Oheb Shalom *
Talbot County

Dr. William Blair
Creation Care Group, Presbytery of Baltimore *
Baltimore County

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Unity United Methodist Church *
Baltimore City

Rev. Isaac Bonney
St. Mark's Episcopal Anglican Church *
Silver Spring

Rev. Martha Bonwitt
Trinity Episcopal Church *
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Rev. Sandy Boone
Water's Edge Partnership *
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Christ Congregational Church United Church of Christ *
Silver Spring

Rev. James Brassard
Christian Community Presbyterian *
Bowie

Rev. Debra Brewin-Wilson
St. Thomas' Episcopal Parish *
Croom

Rev. B.E. Brought
Friendship United Methodist Church *
Friendship

Rev. Byron P. Brought
Severna Park United Methodist Church *
Severna Park

Rev. Virginia Brown-Nolan
Episcopal (Retired) *

Rev. Will Butler
Union Memorial United Methodist Church *
Baltimore City

Rev. Denise Cabana
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United Church of Christ *
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Emmanuel United Methodist Church *
Laurel

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Homestead United Methodist Church *
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Rev. Wayne Chung
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Baltimore City

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Peace Lutheran Church (Retired) *
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Mishkan Torah Synagogue *
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Glade United Church of Christ *
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Emmanuel United Methodist *
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* Affiliations are for identification purposes only.