



Focus on State-Level Catholic Creation Care Advocacy

March 26, 2025



Focus on State-Level Catholic Creation Care Advocacy

RECORDING

The webinar is being recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to everyone who registered within the next 24-48 hours.

Questions

Please submit your questions in the Q/A box.

Chat

Please remember to be respectful and civil in all Chat interactions.

Focus on State-Level Catholic Creation Care Advocacy

Prayer

Creator God, all things live, and move, and have their being in you. We praise you God, for the Earth that sustains life. Our demand for growth, and an endless cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify. Humans and animals are forced to flee in search of security.

You made us in your image, with power and responsibility to seek the good for all in Earth's great web of life. Guide us and empower us, to carry out our responsibilities and exercise our power to support all your good creation.

We gather in the image of the Creator **who is a community of love.**

We gather in the name of the Redeemer **who reconciles all of creation.**

We gather in the presence of the Life Giver **who inspires new life and renews it.**

(adapted from the resources Light for Katowice and Season of Creation 2020, Lutherans Restoring Creation)

Focus on State-Level Catholic Creation Care Advocacy

“Encounter for Our Common Home” is a broad U.S. Catholic coalition-led training and advocacy campaign to encounter and urge government and Church leaders to support climate solutions from a place of faith and reason.

When you join you will be the first to hear of campaign events including community-building events, trainings, young adult materials and engagement, webinars, resources, action alerts and more!

[JOIN ENCOUNTER](#)



Encounter
FOR OUR COMMON HOME

<https://godsplanet.us/get-involved/advocacy/>

Focus on State-Level Catholic Creation Care Advocacy



Drew Reynolds
Encounter Georgia



Scott Porter
Kentucky Catholic Conference

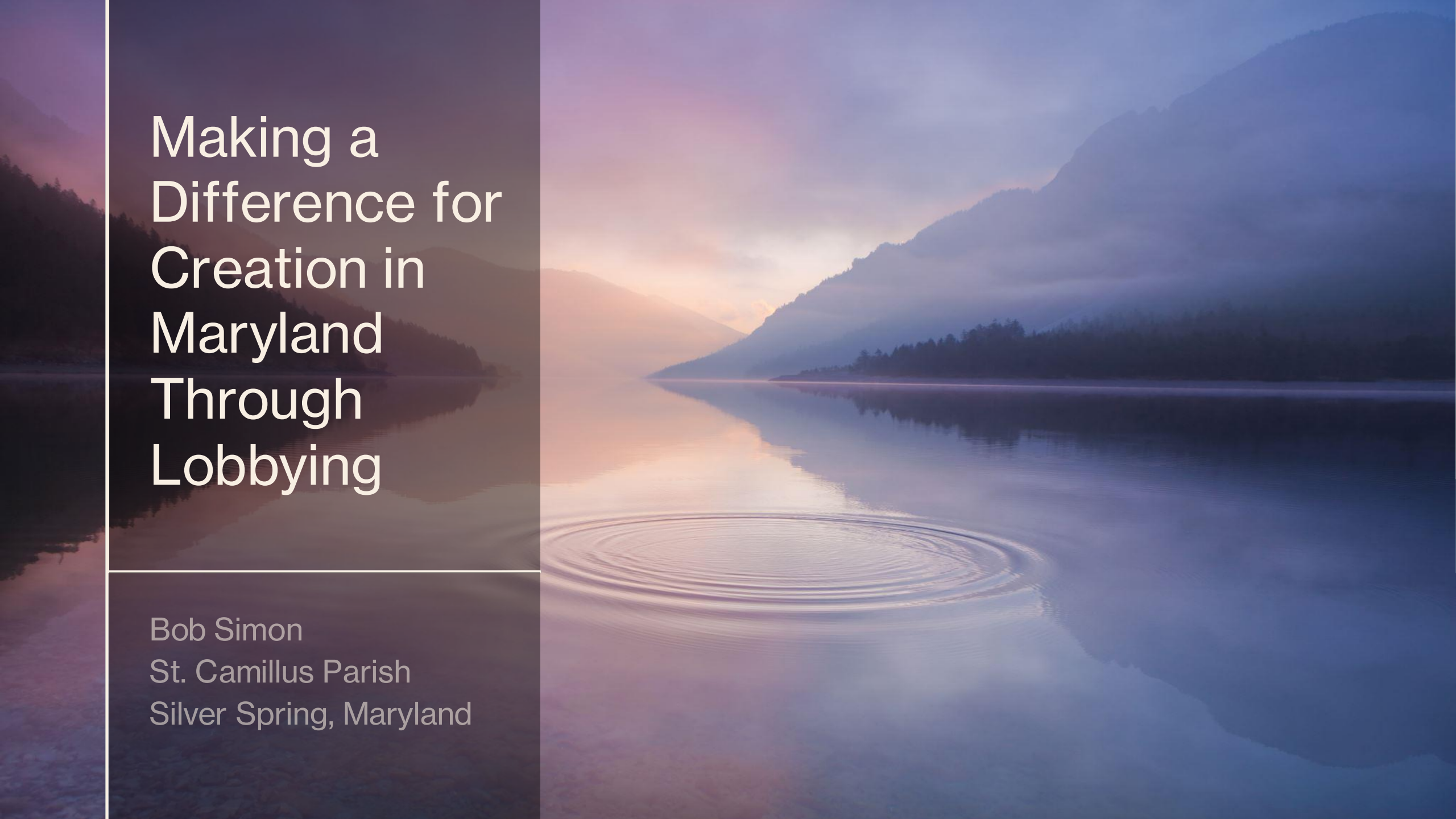


Emily
Boston Catholic Youth Climate Leadership Team



Bob Simon
Maryland Catholics
for Our Common Home

Moderator: Kayla Jacobs, Catholic Climate Covenant

A serene landscape featuring a calm body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, reflecting the sky and surrounding mountains. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, purples, and blues, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The mountains are silhouetted against the sky, with some mist or low clouds hanging around their bases. In the foreground, several concentric ripples are visible on the water's surface, adding a sense of movement to the otherwise still scene. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Making a Difference for Creation in Maryland Through Lobbying

Bob Simon
St. Camillus Parish
Silver Spring, Maryland

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

- * A grassroots effort across the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland, focused on climate and environmental legislation in the Maryland General Assembly.
- * We look for and support key bills that combine hearing “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

- * We communicate and have cordial relations with the staff of the official lobbying arm of Maryland's Catholic bishops (the Maryland Catholic Conference, or MCC), which often supports the same bills.
- * We are careful to distinguish ourselves from the MCC in all our communications, to avoid confusion.



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

* We do our own grassroots lobbying, but we select our target bills and work in cooperation with other groups, such as Interfaith Power and Light, Interfaith Partnership for the Chesapeake, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, and the Maryland League of Conservation Voters.



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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

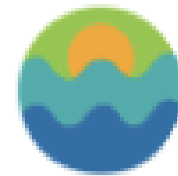


MARYLAND
LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION
VOTERS



INTERFAITH
**Power
& Light**

Our religious response to climate change.



Interfaith
Partners for the
CHESAPEAKE



Chesapeake
Climate Action
Network



SIERRA CLUB
MARYLAND CHAPTER

TRASH FREE



MARYLAND

Process for Identifying Priorities for 2025



**Maryland Catholics
for Our Common Home**

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

- * Core group of about 25 members from across the State
- * Participate in annual prioritization process by the broad environmental community in Maryland (to pick top three priority bills for the community) -- November
- * Leverage the discussion to identify MCCH top priorities
- * Communicate MCCH and community priorities to MCC
- * Finalize list at the start of the Legislative Session -- January

Priority Areas for 2025



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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

- * Cleaner Energy
- * Less Waste
- * More Justice
- * Faster Progress

Priority Areas for 2025



**Maryland Catholics
for Our Common Home**

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

* Cleaner Energy

- HB 398 / SB 316 – Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy (AACE) Act
- HB 220 / SB 10 – Reclaim Renewable Energy Act of 2025

Priority Areas for 2025



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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

* Less Waste

- HB 232 / SB 346 – “Bottle Bill”
- HB 42 / SB 134 – Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Grants

Priority Areas for 2025



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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

* More Justice

- HB 1484 / SB 978 – CHERISH Our Communities Act

Priority Areas for 2025



**Maryland Catholics
for Our Common Home**

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

* **Faster Progress**

- HB 84 / SB 395 – Transportation and Climate Alignment Act of 2025
- HB 128 / SB 149 – Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025

Petition of Support



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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

Collect petition signatures in support of MCCH priority bills, both electronically and in-person after Masses

So far this year, over 700 Maryland Catholics from:

- 45 parishes and religious communities across Maryland
- 40 of Maryland's 47 legislative districts

Parish: _____

Dear Maryland Senators and Delegates:

We join with Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home to support efforts to enact the following bills in this year's session of the Maryland General Assembly:

1. **Clean Transportation.** Improve access to public transportation by lower-income Marylanders (**HB 9 / SB 19 - Transportation Equity Act**) and clean up emissions from heavy trucks, which affect low-income communities (**HB 230 / SB 224 – Clean Trucks Act of 2023**).
2. **Access to Improved Energy Efficiency.** Reform Maryland's energy efficiency program for energy consumers to direct more resources to low-income Marylanders (**HB 169 / SB 144 - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing**) and to combat climate change more effectively (**Energy Savings Act of 2023**).
3. **Clean Electricity.** Stop providing subsidies to polluting forms of energy in Maryland's renewable electricity program (**Reclaim Renewable Energy Act**). Make permanent Maryland's Community Solar Pilot Program, which dedicates a minimum percentage of solar power to low-income households (**Community Solar Pilot Program – Make Permanent Act**). Promote the construction of offshore wind energy farms to deliver clean electricity to Maryland (**Promoting Offshore Wind Energy Resources [POWER] Act**).
4. **Protecting Maryland's Residents, Lands, and Waters.** Accelerate the adoption of green stormwater infrastructure in Maryland to respond to increases in flooding, sewage overflows, and other damage (**Climate Resilience via Green Stormwater Infrastructure Act**). Strictly limit the presence of toxic so-called "forever chemicals" (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS) in pesticides sold or used in Maryland (**HB 319 / SB 158 - Pesticide Registration - PFAS Testing – Requirements Act**).
5. **Climate and Environmental Equity.** Recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Maryland Environmental Policy Act [MEPA], which acknowledged "each person's fundamental and inalienable right to a healthful environment" (**HJ 1 – Environmental Human Rights**) and ensure that state agencies meaningfully consider climate impacts, environmental justice issues, health impacts, and labor implications resulting from their actions (**Climate Equity Act**).

Signature:	Print Name:	OK to Contact?
Address:		E-mail:
Signature:	Print Name:	OK to Contact?
Address:		E-mail:
Signature:	Print Name:	OK to Contact?
Address:		E-mail:
Signature:	Print Name:	OK to Contact?
Address:		E-mail:

Please scan and send completed forms to mcch.advocate@gmail.com.

Testimony at Hearings



Hearing before the House Economic Matters Committee
Maryland General Assembly
February 6, 2025

Statement of Support (FAVORABLE)
of Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home for
HB 398, Abundant Affordable Clean Energy - Procurement and Development (AAEC Act)

Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home (MCCH) is a lay-led organization of Catholics from parishes in the three Catholic dioceses in Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington. It engages in education about, and advocacy based upon, the teachings of the Catholic Church relating to care for creation and respect for all life. MCCH is a grassroots voice for the understanding of Catholic social teaching held by a wide array of Maryland Catholics. In the 2024 Legislative Session, 570 Maryland Catholics from 22 different Catholic parishes and religious communities across the State joined together through MCCH to support several key environmental bills under consideration by the General Assembly. MCCH is independent, though, and should be distinguished as an organization from the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the public policy positions of the bishops who lead these three dioceses.

Because we are attuned both to the cry of a distressed Earth and the cry of the poor who suffer first and foremost from a warming planet, MCCH would like to express our strong support for House Bill 398, Abundant Affordable Clean Energy - Procurement and Development (or the AAEC Act).

As Catholics, we are guided by the teachings of Pope Francis and his predecessors, which have given priority to (1) care for Earth's environment, (2) concern for the economic burdens experienced by the poor, and (3) protection for the workers whose labor is essential to building our energy future. With regard to the environment, in his 2015 encyclical, entitled *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*,¹ Pope Francis stresses that:

There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. (no. 26)

Maryland's public policy in recent years has consistently worked to increase the supply of renewable energy, but decisions taken outside Maryland by the PJM interconnection have impeded projects designed to implement the policies supported by Marylanders and by the General Assembly. Further, aspects of Maryland's regulation of electricity, including the use of Alternative Compliance Payments,

¹ The English text of the encyclical, to which the paragraph number in the parentheses refers, can be found at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

could be improved to return the funds from these pass-through charges back to ratepayers. This would be important as rising utility costs disproportionately impact low- and moderate-income Marylanders. Finally, workers in Maryland who labor on projects to build and maintain our energy infrastructure deserve fair wages and benefits, in keeping with Catholic social teaching that:

All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations.²

The AAEC Act is responsive to all of these concerns and provides a path forward to addressing resource adequacy in the State. The AAEC Act brings on new energy projects that serve Maryland's load requirements within this decade on a least-cost basis. Through AAEC, Maryland will create a path to meet its current and future electric load requirements. The bill does this by improving both the planning processes and the incentives under Maryland law for new renewable energy projects. The AAEC Act directs the Maryland Public Service Commission to create a competitive procurement process in 2026-2027 for up to 1600 MW of total battery storage projects, thus providing a pathway for projects to be operational in this decade. The AAEC Act will also tailor incentives for new renewable energy projects in the state, thus individual projects will receive the properly adjusted incentives they need to come online.

The AAEC Act will also ensure that Maryland ratepayers are protected from rising electric utility bills. And it provides important protection for labor to ensure that Maryland's workers receive fair wages and benefits for their work in building a sound energy future.

For these reasons we strongly urge your support for this bill. Thank you for your consideration of our views and our respectful request for a favorable report on House Bill 398, the AAEC Act.

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "A Catholic Framework for Economic Life" (2015), no. 5, available at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/catholic-framework-economic-life-0>.

So far this
year, 15 pieces
of written
testimony
submitted for
13 different
hearings

“Teach-In” and Lobby Evening

- * Presidents’ Day each year
- * “Teach-In” at a local Catholic high school in Annapolis in the afternoon
 - Info on bills and tips on lobbying
 - Local parish provides a light dinner
- * Lobby appointments starting at 5:30 pm in nearby Legislative Office buildings



Follow-Up Emails and Letters



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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



START ORGANIZING:

ACTIONS

PEOPLE

DETAILS

SUPPORT

GO TO A GROUP



Support action on key environmental bills in the Environment and Transportation Committee of the Maryland House of Delegates

This email will go to your State Delegate who is a member of the Environment and Transportation Committee, and asks for his or her support to advance the five key environmental bills that the committee must act on, in order for those bills to move forward in the legislative process.

The draft email is yours to modify as you like, or to send as-is, if you agree with it as written.

You do not need to add "Dear Delegate XXX" at the beginning of your letter, or to add a closing signature. When you hit the SEND LETTER button, they will be automatically added.

Feel free to mention the specific neighborhood or area in which you live, as this will highlight the fact that you are writing as a constituent.

If you have other reasons for your support for these good environmental bills, please feel free to add that to your emails, as well.

Thanks so much for your help!

Conclusion

- It's learning by doing.
- Each year we have more participants and have better ideas for organizing our efforts.
- Our contributions as a faith-based voice are valued by other environmental groups.



Maryland Catholics for Our Common Home

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

'A moral imperative': Supporters call for passing of Bottle Bill to encourage recycling habits



WBALTV 11

Updated: 6:17 PM EST Feb 14, 2025

Infinite Scroll Enabled

 **David Collins** f X ✉
Reporter



ANNAPOLIS, Md. — State lawmakers are looking to put Mr. Trash Wheel on a diet by considering a bill that would add bottle deposits to single-serve containers.

Encounter GA

encounterga.org

A model for state-level climate and environmental advocacy



Encounter
GEORGIA





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Encounter GA is a non-partisan and faith-based Catholic advocacy organization building relationships with legislators to support climate solutions for Georgia and beyond.

We are the Georgia Chapter of the Catholic Climate Covenant's Encounter for Our Common Home Campaign and the "Advocacy Wing" of the Archdiocese of Atlanta's Laudato Si Action Plan.

Join the
Movement

Advocacy

- Work closely with Archdiocese of Atlanta and Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
- Core group of about 10
- Focus on hosting Encounter meetings with legislators
- Advocacy work done by Georgia Water Coalition and Georgia Conservation Voters, among others

Our Advocacy Priorities



Conservation

We advocate for priorities that promote conservation, recognizing that all of creation is a sacred gift entrusted to our care. As stewards of the natural world, we are called to protect biodiversity, preserve ecosystems, and ensure that our land, water, and wildlife are safeguarded for both present and future generations. Caring for creation is an essential part of our moral responsibility, reflecting our respect for God's handiwork and our solidarity with all living beings.

Climate Change

We advocate for priorities that address climate change, understanding that the degradation of our environment threatens both the earth and the well-being of vulnerable communities. We support policies that address carbon pollution, transition to clean energy, and build resilience to environmental challenges. Our faith calls us to act with urgency and justice, recognizing as Pope Francis has said that the climate crisis is not just an ecological issue but also a moral one, requiring us to protect both people and the planet.



Sustainability

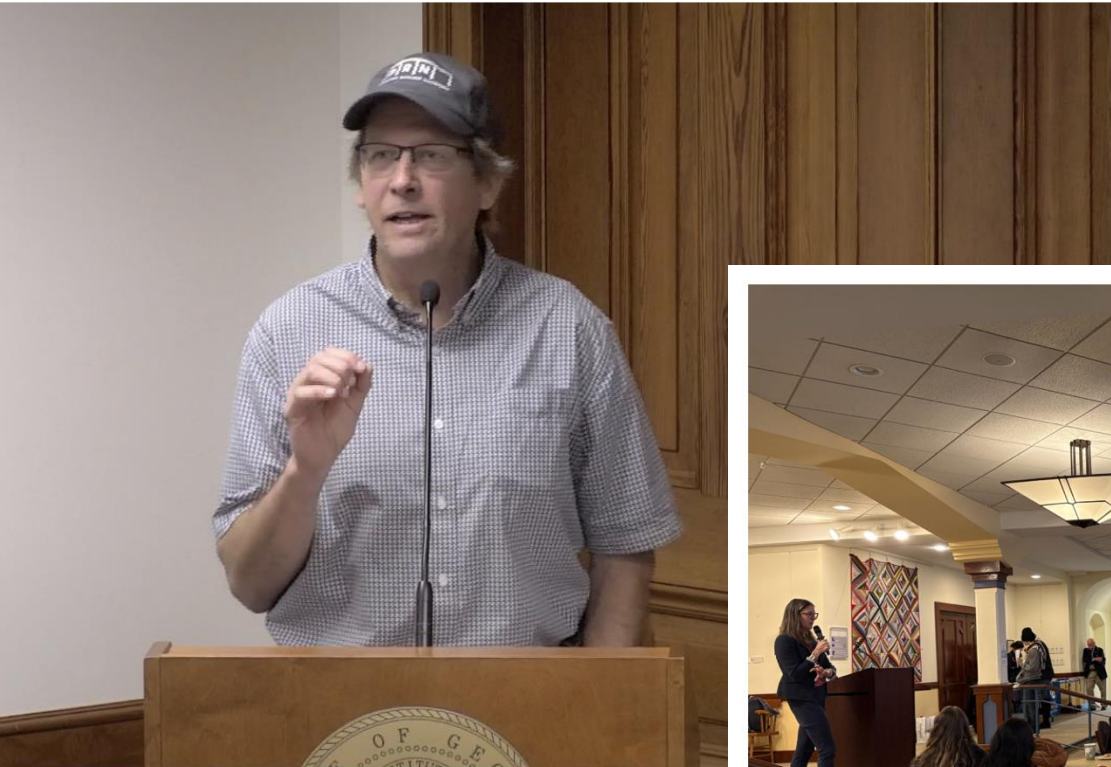
We advocate for priorities that advance sustainability, affirming that the well-being of humanity and the health of the environment are deeply interconnected. Sustainable development must be rooted in justice, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of people's dignity or the earth's resources. By promoting policies and practices that balance human needs with environmental responsibility, we seek to build a future where both communities and creation can thrive in harmony.

Environmental Justice

We advocate for environmental justice, recognizing that the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are deeply intertwined. The degradation of our natural world disproportionately harms the poor, elderly, and disabled within our society. Our faith calls us to uphold the dignity of all people by addressing environmental harm, ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and land, and advocating for policies that protect both the planet and the most vulnerable.



Advocacy Opportunities



...ing testimony at the hearing



ynolds (left) and Lauren Galucki Hoade (right) meet with Sen. ... discuss support for SB 34, the Data Centers bill.



Issue briefing and advocacy training at Central Presbyterian Church prior to walking over to the Capitol.

Advocacy Training in Parishes

Host an Advocacy Workshop at your Parish

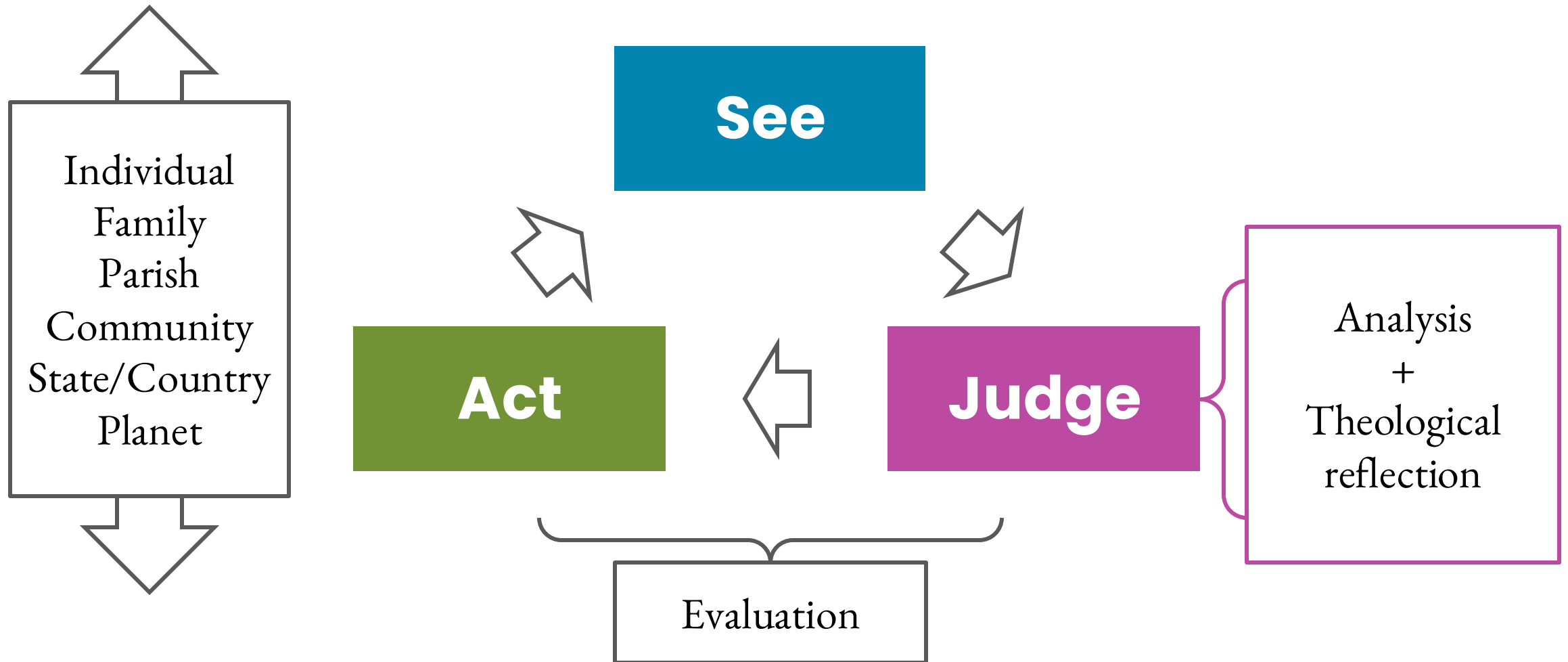
Our Encounter GA Team can facilitate an advocacy workshop at your Georgia parish to explore strategies for protecting our common home. Discover how the See-Judge-Act framework and Catholic Social Teaching can guide environmental advocacy in your community. Gain practical ideas you can implement, such as planting a garden, adding rooftop solar, or reaching out to legislators at the local, state, and federal levels.

[Learn more](#)

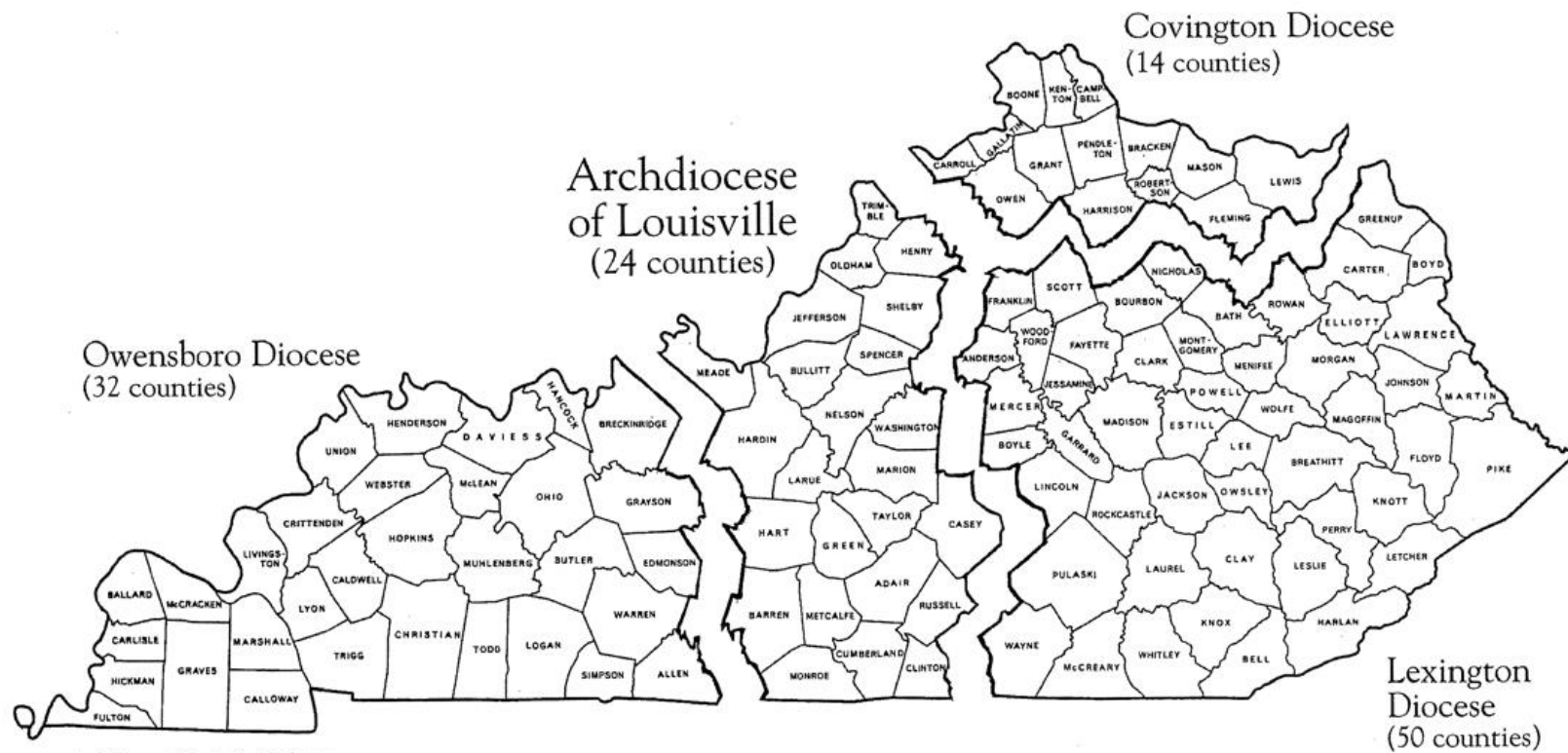


Encounter GA presentation at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Atlanta, GA.

Encounter GA: Advocacy Model for Social Change



Catholic Dioceses of Kentucky



Archdiocesan Map by Paul Hohman