Template for People of Faith Writing to Maryland State Legislators to urge support of *Two Bills Pertaining to Transparency in the Public Service Commission*

NOTE: Personal letters, personal calls, and letters that have been handwritten or hand signed and mailed gain the attention of state elected officials. They notice when you put in the effort to contact them personally. Please customize the text below to make it your own.

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The Honorable (Your State Delegate or Senator, visit <http://mdelect.net/> if not sure who that is)

(delegates) House Office Building, 6 Bladen St, Annapolis, MD 21401-1912

(senators) Senate Office buildings, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: Senate Bills XXX & XXX, and House Bills XXX & XXX – Forest Conservation Act Amendments

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_: OR Dear Delegate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

As a person of faith, I believe all Maryland residents should enjoy equal protections from exposure to pollution and polluting industries. This is why I am writing to urge your support of HB XXX and XXX/SB XXX and XXX.

Do you view this bill as a matter of environmental justice? I do. It mandates steps by Maryland's Public Service Commission to increase its accountability to citizens so that future public utility projects do not impose harm on communities located near those projects. In fact, the current process for approving such projects does very little to protect the very citizens our government is required to serve, and this weakness in the present legal structure was something the Commission itself recognized. In its decision to site a new gas-fired power plant in Brandywine, an area already burdened by multiple other power plants, the Commission wrote:

*“It is unfortunate for Brandywine that it is a suitable and legally available area for proposed power plant projects. If a proposed plant to be sited in Brandywine meets all legal requirements (at all governmental levels), the fact that other plants are located nearby is not a legal restriction to another one being built. This is true even though the negative impacts of a plant fall most severely upon Brandywine while the benefits are distributed across a much larger geographic area.”*

These two parallel bills deserve your attention and support, because they position Maryland to systematically ensure justice and fairness in the way utility projects are implemented. The bills enact steps to change the unfair legal framework that allows decisions to be made with disregard for the welfare of the people who will be most affected by those decisions.

As a member of (name of congregation or faith community), I feel called to raise these bills to your attention and to urge your support on moral grounds.

Sincerely,

Name and Address