



## Central Maryland Ecumenical Council

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January 28, 2016

**RE: Community Greening and Cleanup Act, SB57/HB31**  
**Position: Favorable**

Dear Governor Larry Hogan,

The LORD is a great God, the great king over all other gods. The earth's depths are in his hands; the mountain heights belong to him; the sea, which he made, is his along with the dry ground, which his own hands formed.

**(Psalm 95:3-5 CEB)**

We are writing to express our concern about the health of Maryland's water and its impact on our communities, especially on children and future generations. We support the Community Cleanup and Greening Act (HB31, SB57) which will curb the use of plastic bags in our state.

We are seriously concerned about the impact plastic has on the environment. Plastic bags account for a significant portion of litter pollution in our communities and waterways, including streams and rivers that flow to the Chesapeake Bay. We urge you, Governor Hogan, to take bold and courageous steps toward ensuring safe and clean water for our communities by supporting a ban on plastic bags in Maryland.

Our common beliefs call for care of God's Creation with a particular emphasis on regard for the poor. We share your concern and do not wish this legislation to pose an undue economic burden on low-income communities or small businesses. We encourage and will support creative initiatives that accomplish both: what's good for people as well as the planet.

Enactment of similar legislation in Washington D.C., has **shown a 60% reduction in bag use, and a 60% reduction in litter**. Only 8% of D.C. business owners opposed the law and its implementation. We, the undersigned members of the Ecumenical Leaders Group of Maryland support legislation that encourages citizens and businesses to greatly reduce their use of plastic bags. *This is a small but vital step toward living in harmony with God's Creation.* We hope we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Dr. John Deckenback  
Chairperson, Ecumenical Leaders Group of Maryland\*

**The Reverend Dr. John Deckenback (Chairperson)**  
Conference Minister, Central Atlantic Conference, United Church of Christ

**The Reverend Allen V Harris**  
Regional Minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Capital Area

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

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

**The Reverend Dr. Marcus Matthews**  
Bishop, Baltimore Washington Conference United Methodist Church

**The Reverend Mary Gaut**  
Interim General Presbyter, Presbytery of Baltimore, (PCUSA)

**Robert Rhudy**  
Interim General Secretary, Baltimore Yearly Meeting (Quakers)

**Reverend Kevin Slayton**  
President, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Metro Baltimore

**The Right Reverend Eugene Taylor Sutton**  
Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

**The Reverend Fred Weimert**  
President, Central Maryland Ecumenical Council

The Ecumenical Leaders Group is made of the bishops, presidents, executives of Christian denominations. To contact the ELG call or email Gary Gillespie, Executive Director, Central Maryland Ecumenical Council at 443-703-6498 (cell) or email [cmecouncil@gmail.com](mailto:cmecouncil@gmail.com)

