

## **Green Organizing Action Team (GOAT) Noat for March 2018**

**The Legislative Session in Annapolis is Full Speed Ahead:** Several important pieces of environmental legislation are moving on the pathway toward votes in the Maryland Assembly in the session running from now until April 9<sup>th</sup>. Very briefly, these bills include:

- **Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act (HB 1453 and SB 0732)** to increase renewable energy (wind, solar, geothermal) to be the source for at least 50% of the state's energy portfolio by 2030; to exclude trash incineration from the renewable energy portfolio; and create opportunities for workforce development in the renewable energy industry especially for women, people of color, and veterans. This bill addresses health, economic, and social justice issues as well as climate change. Members of the faith community from across the state, including 10 people from Homewood, had a very successful lobby night with visits to key legislators on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Hearings are coming up in the relevant House and Senate committees on March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. ***A key vote on this bill in the Senate Finance Committee will be cast by Senator Katherine Klausmeier. If you live in her district - Parkville, White Marsh, Rosedale, and Overlea - please consider contacting her to ask for her support. We can help you with messaging!***
- **Amendments to the Forest Conservation Act (original legislation enacted in 1994)** will address a dramatic loss of forest canopy in the past eight years by enacting measures to retain existing forests and mitigate future loss. This is listed as House Bill 766 and as Senate Bill 610.
- **Prohibition of Polystyrene Foam Packaging** will prohibit the sale of this packaging in the state as well as the use by food services and restaurants. Two counties and three cities in Maryland have already instituted bans against this material that is a pollutant and a carcinogen. Homewood approved support for this effort at February's Meeting for Business. One of the lead organizations in this effort is Trash Free Maryland. See their fact sheet at [https://trashfreemaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Foam\\_Revised-as-of-1.17.18-1.pdf](https://trashfreemaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Foam_Revised-as-of-1.17.18-1.pdf)

- **U.S. Climate Alliance Membership** is legislation supporting Maryland's entry into this alliance, which is a response to the Trump Administration's decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Change Accords. Governor Hogan has approved Maryland's participation, so there is not an immediate issue. This legislation, listed as SB 138 and HB 3, would prevent Maryland from withdrawing without approval by the state's Assembly.

GOAT will continue to watch the progress of the bills and asking for your support.