



NAACP

Maryland

STATE CONFERENCE

HB0088 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards (Grid Reliability and Inclusive Distribution Act))

Date: February 3, 2022

Committee: House Economic Matters Committee

Position: Favorable

Staci Hartwell

NAACP

On behalf of the NAACP Maryland State Conference, I urge a favorable report from the committee on **HB0088 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards**

This bill works in concert with the Public Service Commission's Distribution System Planning process by providing valuable guidelines to the process, including inclusive stakeholder engagement. Importantly, this bill also directs federal infrastructure funding to support grid investments, saving ratepayers money, and aiding the state in meeting renewable energy goals.

Our distribution grid is the system of poles, wires, transformers, and substations that supplies electricity to our communities. This grid urgently needs to be modernized to ensure Maryland is ready to integrate energy resources such as residential solar, electric vehicle charging stations, and energy storage. We must ensure that investments in the grid are done with climate, equity, and labor standards in mind. The GRID Act supports this effort by:

- Defining how we will meet state climate goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, expanding our use of renewable energy, promoting equity, supporting family-sustaining employment, and ensuring energy resiliency and cost-effectiveness.
- Directing one-time federal infrastructure funding to support grid improvements. This works in tandem with grant funding from the Department of Energy to support grid modernization.
- Ensuring representative engagement in the distribution grid planning processes
- Requiring the PSC to issue an annual report about its progress.
- Supporting family-sustaining jobs by requiring that all distribution grid upgrade projects meet basic labor standards

The way our distribution grid is planned and maintained will greatly impact the quality of life for generations to come. This will be particularly true for communities that bear the greatest burden of climate change, dirty energy sources, and energy costs. By passing HB 88, we can harness the opportunity of increased federal funds to save ratepayers money, strengthen our energy grid, and meet our climate goals.

Thank you for your consideration of HB0088. For all the reasons stated above, I urge a favorable vote from the committee.

Respectfully Submitted

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