

HB0088 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards

Date: February 3, 2022

Committee: House Economic Matters Committee

Position: Favorable

Victoria Venable, Maryland Director - Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, I urge a favorable report from the committee on **HB0088 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards**.

The CCAN Action Fund is the advocacy arm of Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a grassroots organization dedicated to climate action in the Chesapeake region of Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC. We have been strong advocates for clean energy expansion and the electrification of our highest greenhouse gas emitting sectors. We believe that HB0088 is a crucial piece of legislation to ensure that our electricity grid can meet the needs of our energy transition and withstand imminent climate stressors such as severe weather and higher energy demands.

2022 is a crucial year for both climate action and infrastructure investment. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – the world’s leading scientific authority on climate science – reports that the 2020s are the decisive decade to make meaningful changes to emissions and avoid a climate crisis.¹ Meanwhile, in November of 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (HR 3684) (the "IIJA"), sending an influx of federal funding to states through grant programs. The IIJA represents one of the largest investments in energy infrastructure in U.S. history. This makes 2022 a year of climate urgency AND opportunity.


However, funds from the IIJA are not guaranteed to reach Maryland if the General Assembly does not adequately position our state agencies to receive them. Many funding streams from the IIJA are competitive, merit-based grants that require states to demonstrate commitments to carbon reductions, renewable energy deployment, and labor standards. Without further guidelines to the distribution planning process, Maryland may not be eligible for funding opportunities created by the IIJA.

HB0088, what we call the Grid Reliability and Inclusive Distribution Act, will ensure that our state is prepared to take on the challenges and opportunities of climate action, particularly in this period of increased investments and support from Washington. Most importantly, the GRID Act:

¹ ["What Does '12 Years to Act on Climate Change' \(Now 11 Years\) Really Mean?", Inside Climate News, Aug, 27, 2019.](#)

- Defines how we will meet state climate goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, expanding our use of renewable energy, promoting energy equity, and ensuring energy resiliency and cost-effectiveness.
- Positions Maryland to accept and harness federal infrastructure funding to support grid improvements.
- Ensures representative and inclusive engagement in the distribution grid planning processes.
- Supports family-sustaining jobs in distribution grid upgrade projects.

Our state is on the brink of a clean energy revolution and to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, we must continue to invest in renewable energy, efficiency, and reliability. We cannot afford to miss this window of both great opportunity and intense urgency. We thank the sponsor for supporting this work and the committee for its consideration of HB0088. For all the reasons stated above, we urge a favorable vote from the committee.



CONTACT: Victoria Venable, Maryland Director
Victoria@chesapeakeclimate.org (301) 960-8824