



**Committee: Economic Matters**

**Testimony on: HB0088 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards**

**Organization: WISE**

**Submitting: Monica O'Connor, Environment/Climate Legislative Liaison**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 3, 2022**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. WISE is an all-volunteer women-led group of advocates formed in Anne Arundel County, with over 600 members. WISE urges you to vote favorably on HB0088.

HB0088 complements the Public Service Commission's (PSC's) existing Distribution System Planning process. The bill will establish a Distribution System Planning Workgroup to study issues related to energy distribution planning and implementation. In addition, it will require the PSC to adopt regulations related to energy distribution planning and implementation; require the PSC and the Maryland Energy Administration to coordinate with utilities regarding federal infrastructure grid improvement funding; and establish labor standards for contractors and subcontractors in grid modernization projects.

Modernizing Maryland's electricity grid is a critical part of the state's strategy to transition to renewable energy, electrify the building and transportation sectors, and to be resilient in the face of a changing climate. Workers involved in distribution grid upgrade projects also must reap the benefits of the transition through family-sustaining wages, health and retirement benefits, and apprenticeship programs. The bill includes these provisions, as well as plans to recruit and retain state residents, including

returning citizens, women, minority individuals, and veterans.

HB0088 will help Maryland undertake the improvements needed to have a resilient electricity grid that supports the clean-energy economy and workers of the future. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.