



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate C. T. Wilson, Chair
Delegate Brian M. Crosby, Vice Chair
Economic Matters Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: February 28th, 2023
RE: HB0169 Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation
Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income
Housing

The MLLC supports HB0169 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing, 2023

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0169.

Maryland's low-income residents pay 550% more as a portion of income for energy than most Marylanders.¹ The majority of these households (55%) are Black, Hispanic, or Asian families.² Money spent on high utility bills is money that cannot be used for other daily necessities, from school supplies to medical bills.³ From rural Maryland to Baltimore City, these residents often endure broken HVAC systems, drafty windows, and unreliable electrical systems, all of which contribute to high energy bills and unhealthy living conditions.⁴ Marylanders can't afford to wait.⁵ Residents in low-income homes already endure dangerous heat and cold extremes in poorly insulated homes.⁶ Maryland lags behind other states in helping low-income residents achieve energy savings and lower energy costs, as low-income households dedicate 8% of their annual incomes to energy costs nationally, while low-income households pay 13% in Maryland.⁷ Moreover, Maryland has no goal or agency accountable for maximizing energy efficiency in the low-income households most in need of energy savings.

Using energy more efficiently is one of the fastest, most cost-effective ways to lower utility bills and stabilize electricity prices for vulnerable households.⁸ This bill sets a standard of 1% annual energy savings for low-income households by 2026; coordinates and consolidates a range of federal and state funding sources; increases EmPOWER funding for the MEEHA and LIEEP; enables state-funded

¹ *How One Percent Energy Savings Will Help Lower Energy Costs for Low-Income Marylanders*. Energy Efficient Maryland. (2020). <https://energyefficientmaryland.org/one-percent-savings>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Round, I., Conner, J., Rowley, J., & Banisky, S. (2019, August 15). *Red alert neighborhood heat inequality*. CNS Maryland – Capital News Service. <https://cnsmaryland.org/interactives/summer-2019/code-red/neighborhood-heat-inequality.html>.

⁷ *How One Percent*. (Internet).

⁸ Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). *Local Energy Efficiency Benefits and Opportunities*. EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/local-energy-efficiency-benefits-and-opportunities>.

home energy performance audits in low-income homes; funds energy efficiency improvements such as new insulation, better windows, EnergyStar appliances, LED light bulbs, and more for qualified low-income homes; and creates the Green and Healthy Task Force. Overall, this bill supports greater energy equity for low-income Marylanders.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0169.