



**Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce**  
10665 Stanhaven Place, Suite 300A  
White Plains, MD 20695

**HOUSE BILL 1296**

*An Act Concerning Electricity – Offshore Wind Projects – Alterations*

**DATE:** February 29, 2024

**POSITION:** SUPPORT

The Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce (SMMCOC) offers this letter in support of House Bill 1296, An Act Concerning Electricity – Offshore Wind Projects – Alterations.

The Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce (SMMCOC) was formed to establish a group comprised of community-based organizations in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s counties to jointly address the minority community’s issues and concerns. The SMMCOC is an organization managed by a volunteer Board of Directors and Officers, established to promote civic, commercial, and industrial progress within the community. I am proud to be Chairman of the Board and to represent SMMCOC here today.

Empowering small, minority owned businesses in Southern Maryland is a main focus of ours, which is why we support the development of offshore wind farms and a local supply chain here in Maryland. US Wind is a leading example in this effort as they work to develop offshore wind farms and establish a manufacturing facility that will make component parts for its projects and the rest of the industry. This manufacturing facility, Sparrows Point Steel, has the potential to be a real game-changer for small, minority businesses across the state, including in Southern Maryland. It’s especially exciting to know that Southern Maryland minority businesses who are already working in the fields of concrete and rebar, construction, electrical, demolition, HVAC and others can transfer their skills to the exciting new offshore wind industry.

HB 1296 would keep Maryland’s offshore wind goals on track, as well as all the jobs that come from a thriving local supply chain. The bill allows qualified offshore wind developers to apply for outstanding Round 1 and Round 2 ORECs created as a result of recent changes in the market and to add additional capacity to existing projects to make up for the new shortfall in offshore wind capacity. Specifically, the bill creates the opportunity for remaining projects to make up at least 500 MW (approximately 33

additional turbines) of the 900 MW of recent lost capacity. This increase in offshore wind capacity is good for the environment, it's good for the economy, and it's good for job creation across the state.

SMMCOC wholeheartedly supports HB 1296 and its benefits to the State of Maryland and its people.