



## TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

### **HB 505 - Limitations on Cost Recovery by Public Service Companies and Reports on Votes Cast at Meetings of Regional Transmission Organizations (Utility Transparency and Accountability Act)**

**POSITION: Support**

**By: Linda T. Kohn, President**

**Date: February 22, 2024**

Since the emergence of the environment movement in the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet and promote public health. The League believes in increasing transparency and accountability. These are both critical for ensuring the protection of utility customers and holding Maryland accountable to meeting its climate goals.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports HB 505**, which would prohibit utility companies from spending ratepayer money on certain activities - like lobbying, entertainment, and gifts - and implement critical transparency and accountability measures. **HB 505** would mandate annual reporting to the Public Service Commission on these expenses, and require the publication of votes cast by utility companies on Regional Transmission Organization issues.

Utility companies shouldn't be using ratepayer money to advance their own self interests. Ratepayer dollars should be used for what they're paying for - the provision of safe, efficient energy to their homes and buildings. Customers shouldn't have to foot the bill when utilities lobby for policies that work against the interests of Marylanders and impede progress towards the state's climate goals.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **strongly urges a favorable report on HB 505.**