



**Testimony to the Economic Matters Committee
HB316 - The Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy Act
Position: Favorable**

02/06/2025

The Honorable Delegate Wilson, Chair
Economic Matters Committee
Room 231, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Wilson and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland Fund provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

I am writing today to urge your favorable report on HB316, which would quickly maximize the amount of clean energy generation within our grid, making electric rates more affordable for Marylanders and bringing our state closer to its climate goals.

It is no surprise that energy rates are soaring across the state, and are only expected to increase after the recent PJM capacity auction. Utility providers in Maryland cut off electricity 74,000 times last year,¹ an amount that is likely to increase as rates continue to rise.

Utilities are not a luxury, they are a necessity. Maryland saw 25 heat related deaths in 2024, and nearly 1,200 emergency room visits for heat-related illnesses, the highest in recorded history. As climate change continues to lead to hotter and hotter summers, it is imperative that all people are able to afford the electricity needed to cool their homes.

In terms of climate change, we must ensure we are taking the necessary steps to move towards our state's goals for clean energy. According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, a majority of Marylanders would prefer to see more of their energy coming from renewable sources. Although our state is in dire need of energy now, it would be counterproductive to pour millions of taxpayer dollars into an energy production source that is not sustainable and does not meet our long-term climate goals.

These points make one thing clear, we need to produce more clean energy in order to bring rates down and alleviate the cost burden for consumers. HB316 would do just that, by bringing more clean electric energy to the grid through innovative strategies such as battery storage facilities and new incentives and zoning for solar energy.

Producing more energy is essential to meet the needs of Marylanders who are struggling to pay their bills. Producing clean energy is essential to mitigate the impacts of climate change, which disproportionately harms low-income communities.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB316.

¹https://digitaledition.mdgazette.capitalgazette.com/tribune/article_popover.aspx?guid=15412912-ce8d-4b78-aea4-ce483556d079
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Thank you,

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