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## **Oppose SB 434**

Empowering New Energy Resources and Green Initiatives Toward a Zero-Emission  
(ENERGIZE) Act of 2025  
February 20, 2025  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

We, the undersigned organizations, are submitting this testimony in opposition to major provisions in the ENERGIZE Act (SB434/ HB505) that seek to promote and subsidize nuclear energy in Maryland. The inclusion of new rules for the procurement and permitting of new nuclear reactors in our state will undermine Maryland's transition to an efficient, economical and a truly clean energy system.

While state leaders have regularly talked about reaching 100% clean energy by 2035, the ENERGIZE Act seeks to remake the state's renewables program by now counting dangerous, dirty and expensive nuclear energy as a form of 'clean energy.'

This new accounting trick would allow electricity from the existing nuclear reactors at Calvert Cliffs to count towards the state's 100% clean energy goals and disincentivize the investments and resources needed for true renewables like wind and solar.

Maryland legislators should make sure that Calvert Cliffs---a facility which is now almost 50 years old and could have a planned or unplanned retirement in the future---is not a central piece of the state's clean energy goals nor that the facility receive subsidies in the years ahead due to being uncompetitive in the market. The levelized capital costs of electricity production of [nuclear is three times the cost of solar](#).

Worse yet, the largest section in the ENERGIZE Act deals with new rules to promote the buildout of new nuclear reactors in the state of Maryland. Building out these new reactors is going to be more expensive than simply continuing to build out wind and solar, and will ultimately cost Maryland ratepayers billions. Last year, Georgia finished building the first new nuclear reactors in the U.S. in decades for \$36.8 billion. The facility cost \$22 billion more than initially estimated. Ratepayers' bills have already gone up to pay for it and they'll be paying the astronomical cost for decades to come.

It's also not clear why Maryland should pursue this plan given that the experts have acknowledged that new nuclear facilities would not likely be available for many years. In truth, it takes more than a decade to plan and build new nuclear power plants; completion of the new Georgia Vogtle reactors took 18 years from when they were first proposed.

Perhaps the most problematic part of the ENERGIZE Act is a short "community benefits" portion of the legislation that deals with how to build out the facilities fairly. But the section says nothing about the process by which the state would choose the locations of these new facilities,

how communities would be consulted, the risk assessment of negative environmental and social impacts, nor how the state would ensure that environmental justice principles would be factored in to protect the most vulnerable communities where these type of dangerous facilities usually end up. Experts warn that new nuclear facilities in Maryland will also necessitate new hazardous material and emergency planning programs in Maryland communities to deal with the long-lived radioactive and toxic waste from these facilities. The bill does not provide any acknowledgment, planning, or protections for Maryland's communities for these potentially dangerous new nuclear reactors.

For all these reasons, we urge you to oppose these provisions in the ENERGIZE Act and any bill that promotes more nuclear power in our state. Nuclear energy should have no place in our state's plans to move towards 100% clean energy.

Whether it's old nuclear plants or new ones, every credit we give or dollar we spend propping up the energy of our past is a dollar we can't spend on the transition to a clean, safe and affordable energy economy.

Signed,

Beyond Nuclear

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

Climate Communication Coalition

Echotopia, LLC

Food & Water Watch

HoCo Climate Action

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Mountain Maryland Movement

Nuclear Information and Resource Service

Potomac Riverkeeper Network

Waterkeepers Chesapeake