



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

P.O. Box 7595, Largo MD 20792

ProgressiveMaryland.org

Info@progressivemaryland.org

Bill Title: [HB1532](#) Continuing the Next Generation Energy Act

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst on behalf of Progressive Maryland

Date: February 27, 2026

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

My name is Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst for Progressive Maryland, a member-led, power-building organization that advocates for working class people tackling a wide range of issues, including environmental justice. We have over 125,000 members spanning across Maryland with significant bases in Baltimore City, Prince George's, Montgomery, Frederick, and Harford counties, as well as the Eastern Shore. **Progressive Maryland supports HB1532 Continuing the Next Generation Energy Act with some crucial amendments related to consumer protections.**

Despite PMD membership diversity, members are aligned on one issue: that utility bills are depleting their income and aggravating the cost of living. This crisis is not a product of an energy efficiency program like EmPOWER, but the exorbitantly high electricity rates charged by utility companies. Therefore, cutting programs that relieve this financial burden is the last action the state should take at this time.

We thank Speaker Pena-Melnyk, Chair Korman, and Committee Chair Fraser-Hidalgo for their time in developing this bill and especially support the provision directing the PSC to assess the possibility of moving to a state-wide third-party administrator that is responsible for implementing the EmPOWER program and streamlining this process. Every utility has its own process for implementing EmPOWER for their customers but this leads to duplicative efforts across utilities, potentially resulting in higher costs for ratepayers. The transition to a third-party administrator will ensure that the state is incentivized to promote energy efficiency unlike the status quo.

We advise the committee to remove the provision aiming to assess the cost effectiveness of individual residential EmPOWER programs. Cutting these programs during an unprecedented cost of living crisis removes a cost saving measure consumers could otherwise use to reduce their energy bills. Utilities' habit of overspending and recovering these costs through ratepayer money indicate that they may not be effectively implementing the EmPOWER program. The

introduction of a third party administrator will address this issue of cost-effectiveness, all while ensuring that consumers benefit from clean energy programs.

Given these suggestions, we recommend that the cost-effective language be either completely stricken from the bill or use more robust language to address these concerns. **Progressive Maryland kindly requests that the committee incorporate the suggested changes to House Bill 1532.**