HOUSE BILL 897

C5, M5 6lr0336
CF SB 386

By: **The Speaker (By Request – Administration) and Delegates Acevero, Allen, Amprey, Bhandari, Boafo, Boyce, Coley, Ebersole, Edelson, Fennell, Forbes, Guyton, Harrison, Hill, Holmes, Hornberger, Ivey, D. Jones, Kaufman, Kerr, Lewis, Moon, Moreno, Odom, Pasteur, Patterson, Phillips, Pruski, Roberts, Ruff, Simmons, Simpson, Solomon, Spiegel, Taveras, Taylor, Toles, Tomlinson, Turner, Watson, White Holland, Wims, Woods, Wu, and Ziegler**
Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026
Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Electricity Transmission and Distribution, Energy Storage, and Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund
(Lower Bills and Local Power Act of 2026)

FOR the purpose of requiring an electric company that owns or operates a certain transmission line to participate as a member in a regional transmission organization; requiring a person applying for a certain certificate of public convenience and necessity to include certain information with the application; requiring certain transmission utilities to submit a certain advanced transmission technology implementation report to the Public Service Commission at certain times; authorizing the Commission to develop certain incentives for the deployment and operation of advanced transmission technologies; creating a Solar and Energy Storage Market Stabilization Program in the Maryland Energy Administration; altering the uses of the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund; requiring the Secretary of Transportation to develop certain processes for certain electricity lines and battery energy storage systems to be located within or on certain areas; requiring the Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Administration, the Department of Natural Resources, the Power Plant Research Program, and the Department of Commerce, to conduct a certain study regarding the siting of certain electricity lines and battery energy storage systems in existing rights–of–way; requiring the Commission to approve or deny a certificate of public convenience and necessity for certain construction within a certain period of time; requiring certain funds in the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund to be used to provide refunds or credits to residential distribution customers in a certain fiscal year; and generally relating to electricity and the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund.

EXPLANATION: **CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.**
[Brackets**]** indicate matter deleted from existing law.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Public Utilities
Section 7–103 and 7–207(b)(3)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Public Utilities
Section 7–207(b)(4)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Public Utilities
Section 7–207(i) and 7–805
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Public Utilities
Section 7–207(i)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
(As enacted by Section 2 of this Act)

BY adding to
Article – State Government
Section 9–2018 and 9–20B–05(f)(14) and (i)(5)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – State Government
Section 9–20B–05(a) and (i)(2) through (4)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – State Government
Section 9–20B–05(f)(13) and (14) and (i)(1)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Transportation
Section 8–311

Annotated Code of Maryland
(2020 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

7–103.

(a) An electric company incorporated in Maryland may:

(1) manufacture, sell, and furnish electric power in any municipal corporation or county of the State;

(2) construct a power line to transmit power under, along, on, or over the roadways or public ways of any municipal corporation or county of the State; and

(3) connect the power line from the place of supply to any other structure or object.

(b) (1) An electric company must have the consent of the governing body of the municipal corporation or county before laying or constructing any power line in accordance with subsection (a) of this section.

(2) The governing body of the municipal corporation or county may adopt reasonable regulations and conditions for the laying of a power line, including regulations requiring the electric company to refill and repave any roadway or public way under which the power line is laid.

(C) AN ELECTRIC COMPANY THAT OWNS OR OPERATES A TRANSMISSION LINE THAT IS DESIGNED TO CARRY A VOLTAGE IN EXCESS OF 69,000 VOLTS AND IS LOCATED IN THE STATE SHALL PARTICIPATE AS A MEMBER IN A REGIONAL TRANSMISSION ORGANIZATION.

7–207.

(b) (3) (i) Except as provided in paragraph (4) of this subsection, unless a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction is first obtained from the Commission, a person may not begin construction of an overhead transmission line that is designed to carry a voltage in excess of 69,000 volts or exercise a right of condemnation with the construction.

(ii) For construction related to an existing overhead transmission line, the Commission may waive the requirement in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph for good cause.

(iii) Notwithstanding subparagraph (i) of this paragraph and subject to subparagraph **[**(iv)**] (V)** of this paragraph, the Commission may issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of an overhead transmission line only if the applicant for the certificate of public convenience and necessity:

1. is an electric company; or

2. is or, on the start of commercial operation of the overhead transmission line, will be subject to regulation as a public utility by an officer or an agency of the United States.

(iv) **A PERSON APPLYING FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANSMISSION LINE SHALL INCLUDE WITH THE APPLICATION:**

1. AT LEAST ONE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL THAT USES ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES, AS DEFINED IN § 7–805 OF THIS TITLE, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, TO ADDRESS THE SAME NEED MORE EFFICIENTLY OR COST–EFFECTIVELY THAN THE PRIMARY PROPOSED PROJECT; AND

2. AS DIRECTED BY THE COMMISSION, A DETAILED, WRITTEN EXPLANATION COMPARING THE COST–EFFECTIVENESS, TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY, AND SYSTEM BENEFITS OF EACH ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL COMPARED WITH THOSE OF THE PRIMARY PROPOSED PROJECT.

(V) The Commission may not issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of an overhead transmission line in the electric distribution service territory of an electric company to an applicant other than an electric company if:

1. the overhead transmission line is to be located solely within the electric distribution service territory of that electric company; and

2. the cost of the overhead transmission line is to be paid solely by that electric company and its ratepayers.

[(v)**] (VI)** 1. This subparagraph applies to the construction of an overhead transmission line for which a certificate of public convenience and necessity is required under this section.

2. On issuance of a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of an overhead transmission line, a person may acquire by condemnation, in accordance with Title 12 of the Real Property Article, any property or right necessary for the construction or maintenance of the transmission line.

(4) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, for

construction related to an existing overhead transmission line designed to carry a voltage in excess of 69,000 volts, the Commission shall waive the requirement to obtain a certificate of public convenience and necessity if the Commission finds that the construction does not:

1. require the person to obtain new real property or additional rights–of–way through eminent domain; or

2. require larger or higher structures to accommodate:

A. increased voltage; or

B. larger conductors.

(ii) 1. For construction related to an existing overhead transmission line, including repairs, that is necessary to avoid an imminent safety hazard or reliability risk, a person may undertake the necessary construction.

2. Within 30 days after construction is completed under subsubparagraph 1 of this subparagraph, a person shall file a report with the Commission describing the work that was completed.

7–805.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) "ADVANCED POWER FLOW CONTROL" MEANS TECHNOLOGIES THAT MODULATE CIRCUIT IMPEDANCE OR OTHER ELECTRICAL PROPERTIES TO REROUTE POWER FLOWS TO TRANSMISSION LINES WITH AVAILABLE CAPACITY.

(3) "ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGY" MEANS:

(I) GRID–ENHANCING TECHNOLOGIES; AND

(II) HIGH–PERFORMANCE CONDUCTORS.

(4) "DYNAMIC LINE RATING" MEANS A SYSTEM THAT USES REAL–TIME OR FORECAST WEATHER AND OPERATING CONDITIONS, INCLUDING WIND SPEED AND DIRECTION, TO DETERMINE THE MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF A TRANSMISSION LINE.

(5) "GRID–ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY" MEANS HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE THAT INCREASES THE CAPACITY, EFFICIENCY, OR RELIABILITY OF EXISTING DISTRIBUTION OR TRANSMISSION LINES, INCLUDING:

(I) DYNAMIC LINE RATINGS;

(II) ADVANCED POWER FLOW CONTROL; AND

(III) TOPOLOGY OPTIMIZATION.

(6) "HIGH PERFORMANCE CONDUCTORS" MEANS CONDUCTORS, INCLUDING CARBON FIBER OR COMPOSITE CORE CONDUCTORS AND SUPERCONDUCTORS, THAT, COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL ALUMINUM–CONDUCTOR STEEL–REINFORCED CONDUCTORS:

(I) HAVE A SIMILAR DIAMETER AND WEIGHT; AND

(II) 1. HAVE A DIRECT CURRENT ELECTRICAL RESISTANCE THAT IS AT LEAST 10% LESS;

2. INCREASE THE POTENTIAL ENERGY CARRYING CAPACITY BY AT LEAST 75%; OR

3. HAVE A COEFFICIENT OF THERMAL EXPANSION THAT IS AT LEAST 30% LESS.

(7) "TOPOLOGY OPTIMIZATION" MEANS SOFTWARE THAT IDENTIFIES SWITCHING CONFIGURATIONS TO REROUTE ELECTRICITY AND ALLEVIATE TRANSMISSION CONSTRAINTS.

(8) "TRANSMISSION UTILITY" MEANS AN OWNER OR OPERATOR OF A TRANSMISSION LINE THAT IS DESIGNED TO CARRY A VOLTAGE IN EXCESS OF 69,000 VOLTS AND IS LOCATED IN THE STATE.

(B) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, AND JULY 1 EVERY 3 YEARS THEREAFTER, EACH TRANSMISSION UTILITY SHALL SUBMIT TO THE COMMISSION AN ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION REPORT THAT IS PREPARED BY A THIRD PARTY SELECTED BY THE COMMISSION.

(C) THE REPORT SHALL:

(1) EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL USE OF AND INVESTMENT IN ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES BY THE TRANSMISSION UTILITY OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS AND ASSESS HOW THESE TECHNOLOGIES COULD BE DEPLOYED AT ONE OR MORE OF THE TRANSMISSION UTILITY'S TRANSMISSION LINES IN THE STATE TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY, RELIABILITY, EFFICIENCY, OR COST–EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OR TRANSMISSION SYSTEM;

(2) EXPLAIN HOW THE DEPLOYMENT OF ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES WOULD ACHIEVE:

(I) REDUCED COSTS;

(II) INCREASED TRANSMISSION CAPACITY;

(III) REDUCED TRANSMISSION CONGESTION;

(IV) ENHANCED ADOPTION OF OR REDUCED CURTAILMENT OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES;

(V) INCREASED RELIABILITY; AND

(VI) INCREASED CAPACITY FOR THE CONNECTION OF NEW GENERATION RESOURCES, FOCUSING ON RESOURCES NEEDED TO MEET THE STATE'S RENEWABLE ENERGY PORTFOLIO STANDARD GOALS;

(3) IDENTIFY ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES THAT WERE CONSIDERED BUT NOT SELECTED WHEN EVALUATING THE TRANSMISSION ENHANCEMENTS PLANNED TO MEET IDENTIFIED TRANSMISSION NEEDS FOR THE SUBSEQUENT 5 YEARS AND THE REASONS THOSE ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES WERE NOT SELECTED;

(4) INCLUDE A BENEFIT AND COST EVALUATION COMPARING TRADITIONAL TRANSMISSION INVESTMENTS WITH ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES FOR ALL PROJECTS CONSIDERED; AND

(5) DESCRIBE THE CURRENT LINE RATING METHODOLOGY USED, INCLUDING ANY RELIANCE ON STATIC RATINGS OR SEASONAL ASSUMPTIONS.

(D) THE COMMISSION MAY DEVELOP PERFORMANCE–BASED INCENTIVES FOR THE DEPLOYMENT AND OPERATION OF ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES, INCLUDING:

(1) EARNINGS ADJUSTMENT MECHANISMS;

(2) ACCELERATED COST RECOVERY; AND

(3) SHARED SAVINGS MECHANISMS.

Article – State Government

9–2018.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, "PROGRAM" MEANS THE SOLAR AND ENERGY STORAGE MARKET STABILIZATION PROGRAM.

(B) THERE IS A SOLAR AND ENERGY STORAGE MARKET STABILIZATION PROGRAM IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF LOW–INTEREST AND ZERO–INTEREST LOANS OR GRANTS TO STABILIZE AND BACKFILL INVESTMENT GAPS FOR CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS THAT FACE FINANCIAL UNCERTAINTY AS THE RESULT OF THE LOSS OF FEDERAL TAX INCENTIVES.

(D) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL:

(1) COLLABORATE WITH THE APPROPRIATE UNITS OF STATE GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA BY WHICH PROJECTS SHALL BE EVALUATED UNDER THE PROGRAM;

(2) ISSUE A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND CONDUCT OTHER OUTREACH AS NEEDED TO ASSIST IN THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM;

(3) ESTABLISH A PROCESS BY WHICH PROJECTS MAY APPLY FOR FUNDING UNDER THE PROGRAM;

(4) ESTABLISH TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR LOANS AND GRANTS MADE UNDER THE PROGRAM; AND

(5) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2026, PUBLISH THE CRITERIA FOR THE PROGRAM ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S WEBSITE AND INVITE APPLICATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM.

(E) THE PROGRAM:

(1) SHALL PRIORITIZE PROJECTS THAT ARE THE MOST PREPARED TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION, ALSO KNOWN AS SHOVEL–READY PROJECTS;

(2) SHALL BE A PERFORMANCE–BASED INCENTIVE DETERMINED BY A CLOSED BID SYSTEM IN WHICH THE PROJECTS THAT BID THE LOWEST DOLLAR PER MEGAWATT OF CAPACITY ARE PROVIDED LOANS OR GRANTS FROM THE PROGRAM;

(3) MAY BE SEGMENTED TO INCENTIVIZE THE VARIOUS MARKET

SUBSETS OF SOLAR DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING:

(I) COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECTS;

(II) UTILITY SCALE PROJECTS, AS DEFINED BY THE ADMINISTRATION; AND

(III) BROWNFIELD PROJECTS AND PARKING CANOPIES;

(4) SHALL PRIORITIZE PROJECTS THAT ARE EXPECTED TO BE INTERCONNECTED AND OPERATIONAL WITHIN 3 YEARS AFTER THE DATE THE APPLICATION IS RECEIVED; AND

(5) MAY GIVE PREFERENCE TO PROJECTS THAT INCORPORATE ENERGY STORAGE TECHNOLOGIES.

(F) A LOAN OR GRANT PROVIDED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE FUNDED THROUGH:

(1) FUNDS TRANSFERRED TO THE PROGRAM FROM THE MARYLAND STRATEGIC ENERGY INVESTMENT FUND; AND

(2) ANY OTHER MONEY MADE AVAILABLE TO THE ADMINISTRATION FOR THE PROGRAM.

9–20B–05.

(a) There is a Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund.

(f) The Administration shall use the Fund:

(13) notwithstanding subsection (g) of this section, to pay costs associated with the Air and Radiation Administration within the Department of the Environment; **[**and**]**

(14) TO PAY COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOLAR AND ENERGY STORAGE MARKET STABILIZATION PROGRAM; AND

[(14)**] (15)** to pay the expenses of the Program.

(i) (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2), (3), **[**and**]** (4)**, AND (5)** of this subsection, compliance fees paid under § 7–705(b) of the Public Utilities Article may be used only to make loans and grants to support the creation of new Tier 1 renewable **[**energy**]** sources**, AS DEFINED IN § 7–701 OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ARTICLE,** in the State that

are owned by or directly benefit:

(i) low– to moderate–income communities located in a census tract with an average median income at or below 80% of the average median income for the State; or

(ii) overburdened or underserved communities, as defined in § 1–701 of the Environment Article.

(2) Compliance fees paid under § 7–705(b)(2)(i)2 of the Public Utilities Article shall be accounted for separately within the Fund and may be used only to make loans and grants to support the creation of new solar energy sources in the State that are owned by or directly benefit:

(i) low– to moderate–income communities located in a census tract with an average median income at or below 80% of the average median income for the State;

(ii) overburdened or underserved communities, as defined in § 1–701 of the Environment Article; or

(iii) households with low to moderate income, as defined in § 9–2016 of this title.

(3) For fiscal year 2026 only, up to $100,000,000 of compliance fees paid under §§ 7–705(b) and 7–705(b)(2)(i)2 of the Public Utilities Article shall be accounted for separately within the Fund and may be used for solar development on State government property and local government clean energy projects.

(4) (i) Subject to subparagraphs (ii), (iii), and (iv) of this paragraph, compliance fees paid under § 7–705 of the Public Utilities Article may be used to provide grants to electric companies to be refunded or credited to each residential distribution customer based on the customer's consumption of electricity supply that is subject to the renewable energy portfolio standard.

(ii) The refunding or crediting of amounts to residential distribution customers shall be identified on the customer's bill as a line item identified as a "legislative energy relief refund".

(iii) An electric company awarded a grant under this paragraph:

1. may not retain any of the grant funds to cover overhead expenses; and

2. shall provide all of the grant funds to residential distribution customers.

(iv) The process under subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of this paragraph

related to the refunding or crediting of amounts to residential distribution customers shall be directed and overseen by the Commission.

(5) FOR FISCAL YEARS 2027 THROUGH 2031, COMPLIANCE FEES PAID UNDER § 7–705 OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ARTICLE AND DEPOSITED INTO THE FUND MAY BE USED FOR GRANTS OR LOANS TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF NEW TIER 1 RENEWABLE SOURCES, AS DEFINED IN § 7–701 OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES ARTICLE, IN THE STATE.

Article – Transportation

8–311.

(A) THE SECRETARY SHALL DEVELOP:

(1) PROCESSES, INCLUDING A MODEL LEASING FRAMEWORK AND SAFETY GUIDELINES, FOR ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINES AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS TO BE LOCATED WITHIN EXISTING RIGHTS–OF–WAY ALONG STATE AND INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS OR ON OTHER PROPERTY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT; AND

(2) AN EXPEDITED APPROVAL PROCESS FOR THE SITING OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION LINES AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS WITHIN EXISTING RIGHTS–OF–WAY OR ON OTHER PROPERTY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(B) THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MARYLAND ENERGY ADMINISTRATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, THE POWER PLANT RESEARCH PROGRAM, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SHALL CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHICH EXISTING RIGHTS–OF–WAY MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SITING OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINES AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION.

(C) THE SECRETARY MAY APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL UNDER THIS SECTION.

(D) A PROJECT APPROVED UNDER THIS SECTION IS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

(1) THE PROJECT SHALL COMPLY WITH FEDERAL LAW;

(2) THE OWNER OF THE ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINE OR BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM BEING INSTALLED SHALL PAY:

(I) THE FAIR MARKET VALUE FOR THE USE AND OCCUPANCY OF THE RIGHT–OF–WAY; AND

(II) TO THE STATE ALL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND OTHER APPLICABLE FEES;

(3) THE OWNER OF THE ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINE BEING INSTALLED:

(I) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE COSTS; AND

(II) SHALL RELOCATE THE OWNER'S TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINES AT THE OWNER'S EXPENSE AND IN AN EXPEDITED MANNER IF RELOCATION IS NEEDED FOR ANY PUBLIC PURPOSE; AND

(4) ANY OTHER CONDITIONS SPECIFIED BY THE SECRETARY OR IN REGULATIONS ADOPTED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(E) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2027, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

7–207.

(I) (1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, "ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGY" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 7–805 OF THIS TITLE.

(2) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (B)(4) OF THIS SECTION, THE COMMISSION SHALL ISSUE AN ORDER APPROVING OR DENYING A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY WITHIN 180 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF A COMPLETE APPLICATION FOR CONSTRUCTION TO:

(I) REPLACE THE CONDUCTOR, WIRE, OR ASSOCIATED LINE STRUCTURES OF AN EXISTING TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINE; OR

(II) INSTALL ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TECHNOLOGIES TO EXPAND OR ENHANCE AN EXISTING TRANSMISSION OR DISTRIBUTION LINE.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

7–207.

(i) (1) In this subsection, "advanced transmission technology" has the meaning stated in § 7–805 of this title.

(2) **[**Except as provided in subsection (b)(4) of this section, the**]** **THE** Commission shall issue an order approving or denying a certificate of public convenience and necessity within 180 days after receipt of a complete application for construction to:

(i) replace the conductor, wire, or associated line structures of an existing transmission or distribution line; or

(ii) install advanced transmission technologies to expand or enhance an existing transmission or distribution line.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, from the alternative compliance fees paid into the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund in accordance with § 7–705 of the Public Utilities Article, a portion shall be used to provide grant awards to electric companies, including electric cooperatives and municipal electric utilities, to be refunded or credited to residential distribution customers for electric service in fiscal year 2027 in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

(2) The Governor may transfer by budget amendment up to $100,000,000 of the funds described in paragraph (1) of this subsection to the Public Service Commission to be awarded to electric companies, including electric cooperatives and municipal electric utilities.

(b) The funds described in subsection (a) of this section shall be:

(1) distributed in accordance with § 9–20B–05(i)(4) of the State Government Article; and

(2) refunded or credited to residential distribution customers one time before a peak summer month but not later than October 31, 2026.

SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Governor may transfer by budget amendment up to $10,000,000 from the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund to fund the study required under § 8–311 of the Transportation Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 3 of this Act shall take effect on the taking effect of the termination provision specified in Section 14 of Chapters 625 and 626 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2025. If that termination provision takes effect, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect. This Act may not be interpreted to have any effect on that termination provision.

SECTION 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, subject to the provisions of Section 6 of this Act, this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.