

February 13, 2020

House Economic Matters Committee
Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Committee Members:

I am writing to register my concerns regarding House Bill 561. While the intentions of the bill, lower energy costs for Marylanders, and a greater supply of clean energy, are laudable ones, there are multiple circumstances which suggest a pause may be the most prudent step before moving forward.

Existing Maryland law prohibits aggregation without a Public Service Commission determination of insufficient competition within county or municipal boundaries. There is no such determination on the record at this time. What existing Maryland law already does is encourage customer choice, moving without fee from their default supplier to the supplier of their choice.

If state residents take no action, they are automatically included in the aggregation program, fundamentally changing the state's electric laws. If they then choose to leave the program, they will have to pay a fee to select a different electric supplier. Without intending it, the law will then limit the number of options available to customers who do not wish to pay the fee.

This is counter to the stated reasoning behind Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), centered on less expensive, cleaner energy choices for Marylanders. In addition, there is no guarantee that a CCA will be able to provide either of these goals better than any existing electricity supply options.

I must also express concern over the provision allowing the sharing of customer data without affirmative consent, going contrary to trends throughout the country, including here in Maryland, to ensure customer data is protected. Disclosing personal data without affirmative consent flies in the face of such trends.

I urge the Economic Matters Committee to rectify these concerns before moving forward with this legislation.

Sincerely,



M.H. Jim Estep
President & CEO