

Nanci Wilkinson

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Committee: Senate Finance

Testimony on: SB0315 - "Electric Industry – Community Choice Energy"

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 25, 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to show our support for the Community Choice Energy legislation that has been presented by Delegate Lorig Charkoudian in the 2020 Maryland State legislature. I am representing the Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (MCFACS) in strong support of CCE as the highest priority for the coming year. Maryland seeks to be a leader in fast delivery of clean energy & in rapid reduction of carbon emissions. CCE will give all Maryland communities the power to pursue cleaner cheaper electricity for their residents and businesses.

Why does the Faith Community support clean energy and CCE? We believe as a diverse group of over 40 congregations, synagogues, and temples of all faiths, that taking care of our earth is a moral and ethical issue. Humans have created the climate crisis we are currently in and it is up to humans to solve the climate emergency. The interdependence of humans to nature is dramatically illustrated in our terrifying climate changes - unstoppable fires, 1,000 year floods - and is calling for our solutions everyday. Our failure to act in this time of emergency is a failure of morality.

We support CCE in for the following 3 reasons:

First, is the dangerous effects of Climate Change. In December 2017 the Montgomery County Council passed a climate emergency resolution stating Montgomery County would reduce its greenhouse gas emission by 80% by the year 2027 and 100% by the year 2035. To accomplish these goals, statewide community actions like CCE will be necessary to enable communities-not only Montgomery County-to negotiate their energy rates and the type of energy they want, such as solar and wind, as fast as possible.

The Second reason we support CCE is its statewide application. It will enable all sizes and types of communities, including towns, cities, villages, counties to individually set their own criteria and plan for public review, detail the process and consequences of aggregation, negotiate for more renewables and potentially lower rates. Traditional programs run by utilities typically have a low penetration rate (about 2 percent) whereas an aggregate can have penetration rates of 80 percent or more. Among the states who have done CCE, plans by their locally controlled aggregators are to move to 100% renewable energy more rapidly than is possible with their state's renewable portfolio standards.

Thirdly, the state of Maryland must place the public health of its citizens foremost. In the nine states that have chosen to do CCE, also known as Community Choice Aggregation, the results have been encouraging. Aggressive state legislation of this type is necessary to meet the obligations the county has to dramatically reduce green house gasses. Participation of residents and businesses is entirely voluntary and “opting out” is possible for all. Ownership of the powerplants and grid will remain in is the hands of the utilities and all of the details of each community plan must be filed with the Public Services Commission for final review and approval. Please make sure this legislation is a top priority for the legislature’s support.

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