



The NAACP urges this committee to give a favorable report on HB 379 Public Utilities – Low-Income Housing – Energy Performance Targets. We believe this bill will help create more equity in the delivery of energy efficiency programs for Black and Brown families in Maryland, particularly those who have lesser financial means.

It is well-documented that Black and Brown households dedicate a higher percentage of household income towards energy costs compared to white families. [A study](#) conducted by Energy Efficiency for All and the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy found that Black households faced a 63% greater energy burden than white households nationally. Specifically, in Baltimore, the same study found that more than 36% of Black households in the city had more than double the energy burden of the city median, and more than 56% of all low-income households in Baltimore faced energy burdens more than double the city median.

These are troubling statistics in terms of fairness and racial justice. But these are more than mere statistics. These facts reflect the struggles too many minorities face as they juggle resources to pay for food, housing, medicine, and other vital needs. We know that energy efficiency can help lower energy bills for customers and help reduce these burdens, but to-date energy efficiency savings through EmPOWER have been inadequate for the low-income housing sector in Maryland.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has only made these issues worse. With virtual schooling and many families working from home, households are consuming even more energy which leads to even higher bills than they ordinarily would have. Even before the pandemic, it would have been the right thing to do for Maryland to implement a statewide low-income energy savings goal. Certainly now, in the midst of a pandemic with mounting needs, low-income Maryland residents would greatly benefit from the savings goals as outlined in HB 379 to help save energy, lower bills, and ensure that all families who are paying a surcharge for EmPOWER receive equitable benefits from its energy saving programs.

We support HB 379 and urge the committee to pass this needed legislation.