



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB379, Public Utilities – Low-Income Housing – Energy Performance Targets

Hearing Date: February 4, 2021

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Charkoudian

Committee: Economic Matters

Submitting: Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) -- a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers, and a member of the Howard County Climate Collaboration -- supports HB379.

This bill increases the financial assistance to weatherize low-income housing through the Empower Maryland Program. It requires Maryland to establish a Green and Healthy Task Force and work with this group and other interested stakeholders to develop a plan to coordinate and leverage funding sources to support energy efficiency and other home upgrades.

It also requires a 1% increase in energy efficiency and conservation (EE&C) programs for low-income residents. And, beginning in FY22, the Maryland Gas Expansion Fund will be used to provide low-income weatherization.

Low-income households spend an inordinate percentage of their income on heating and cooling homes. Improving home upgrades for energy efficiency is critical help they need in these difficult times to improve both health and reduce energy bills. This is a major climate justice bill. This is also a major climate change bill, because more than a third of the state's climate emissions come from buildings.

For these reasons, we urge you to support HB0379.

HoCo Climate Action

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Submitted by Ruth White, Steering and Advocacy Committee,

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