



Maryland General Assembly
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 24, 2021

Testimony of Alexandra Wyatt
Policy Director and Legal Counsel
GRID Alternatives

SB 674, Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities - Reform
Sponsors: Senators Elfreth, Griffith, West, Waldstreicher, Jackson,
Smith, Guzzone, Pinsky, Augustine, Beidle, and McCray
Position: FAVORABLE

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 6754 to reform the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities. My name is Alexandra Wyatt and I am Policy Director and Legal Counsel for GRID Alternatives, the nation's largest nonprofit solar installer. Our affiliate GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic (GRID Mid-Atlantic) operates in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, providing solar job training and no-cost solar installations to underserved and low-income customers. GRID Mid-Atlantic offers these comments in support of SB 675 and requests a **favorable** report in committee.

GRID Mid-Atlantic's mission is to build community-powered solutions to advance economic, environmental, and climate justice through renewable energy. We envision a rapid, equitable transition to a world powered by renewable energy that benefits everyone. To achieve that transition, GRID Mid-Atlantic works exclusively with low-income and underserved communities to bring them the many benefits of solar and other clean energy technologies. These benefits include access to hands-on job training opportunities in fulfilling renewable energy careers, as well as lower energy burdens, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and a cleaner, healthier environment. Environmental justice is one of our core policy principles.

Communities that are most impacted by the problem are closest to the solutions. Too often these communities have been excluded from shaping the decisions that affect them. The improvements in this bill would better ensure direct participation from communities affected by environmental injustices. It would also help Commission members be on the same page regarding environmental justice issues and history, and strengthen the data basis for the Commission's recommendations. The bill also strengthens crucial ties between the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities and the Commission on Climate Change.

GRID Mid-Atlantic is very pleased to see Maryland's leaders prioritizing equity and environmental justice as the state looks to increase the ambition of its climate commitments to meet the needs of our moment. We thank you for your consideration of SB 674, and we hope that you will advance it.