

SB 561-Electric Cooperatives-Meetings-Alterations

Uploaded by: Connelly, Valerie

Position: FAV



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February 19, 2021

Support– SB 561 – Electric Cooperatives – Meetings - Alterations

Choptank Electric Cooperative asks for your support of SB 561, legislation that will provide the flexibility to use modern technology for meetings, protect our members during health emergencies like COVID-19 and ensure their continued participation in the activities of the Cooperative.

SB 561, offered by Senator Hershey, **authorizes annual and special meetings** of the members of an electric cooperative **to be conducted in person, virtually, or both**. Under current law, an annual or special meeting of the members of a cooperative must be held in person with a quorum of 50 members attending live and in person.

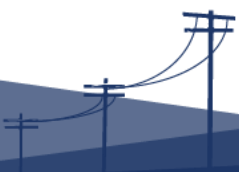
Until 2020, many of our members, Board of Directors and staff looked forward to the annual opportunity to socialize and review the business of the electric cooperative. They enjoyed a meal, visited with experts, and learned about operations over the previous year. Members who attended also received the results of our annual mail-in or electronic vote for the Board of Directors election.

Our annual meeting is held at the end of April. In 2020, the COVID gathering restrictions and concern over the health of members made that impossible. We delayed the meeting as long as we could under our bylaws - holding it in mid-August. We held our special meeting on Member Regulation at the same time. But, in order to provide the greatest amount of protection to members and staff, we held the meeting in the main arena at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, a space designed to hold thousands. We limited attendance to 220 and observed social distancing, mask wearing and all CDC recommendations. Because all members were unable to attend, we also broadcast the meeting live on Facebook. We found that members liked the opportunity to participate this way and urged us to continue to make this format available for future meetings.

SB 561 requires the notice of annual and special meetings to include time and place and instructions for attending virtually if that is an option. The bill repeals the requirement that the quorum be met in person, allowing virtual participants to count towards the quorum. The bill allows voting to occur in person, by mail, electronically, or by any other method provided in the bylaws. On behalf of 54,000 Choptank Electric Cooperative members, we urge a favorable report on SB 561.

Contact

Valerie Connelly, Vice President of Government Affairs & PR
valeriec@choptankelectric.coop or (443) 690-2411



Members First. Every Day.

SB 561 -- COOP Annual Meeting.pdf

Uploaded by: Dennison, Tom

Position: FAV



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People. Power. Progress.

February 23, 2021

SB 561: Electric Cooperatives – Meetings – Alterations

Committee: Senate Finance

Position: SUPPORT

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO), a member-owned electric cooperative based in Hughesville that provides electricity to more than 166,000 customers in Charles, St. Mary’s, Calvert and southern Prince George’s County, supports SB 561. This bill will allow SMECO to hold its Annual Meeting in person, virtually or with a combination of in person and virtual attendance. Under the bill, a person who is unable to attend the meeting in person will be able to participate virtually and count towards the requisite quorum of 50 members in attendance.

One of the lasting lessons of this pandemic is that virtual meetings are here to stay, and we want to embrace this trend to offer another way for our cooperative members to participate in the Annual Meeting. Our Annual Meeting is a good opportunity for members to hear an update from SMECO’s President and CEO, our Board Chairman and to ask questions. Modern technology has taught us that attending a meeting in person should not be the only way to participate.

We hosted our annual meeting in 2020 in one of our truck bays in Hughesville where chairs could be spread apart to meet social distance guidelines, but those who could not attend or did not feel comfortable in attending did not have the opportunity to participate in the meeting. SB 561 will address that.

SB 561 is about convenience and inclusion for SMECO members. When it makes sense, we plan to continue to allow members to participate in person but we want to make sure those who are unable to attend can participate virtually.

Following the passage of this bill, our plan is to propose a change to our bylaws during the 2021 Annual Meeting to reflect the change in participation requirements. If that bylaw change is adopted, the new meeting format can be implemented for the 2022 Annual Meeting.

In conclusion, we want to thank Sen. Hershey, Sen. Eckardt and the entire Southern Maryland Delegation for their support of this bill.

We ask for a favorable report on SB 561.

For more information, contact: Tom Dennison, SMECO

Government and Public Affairs Manager

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For more information, contact: Tom Dennison, SMECO

Government and Public Affairs Manager

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SB 561 Testimony.pdf

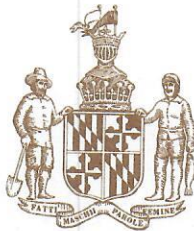
Uploaded by: Hershey, Steve

Position: FAV

STEPHEN S. HERSHEY, JR.
Legislative District 36
Caroline, Cecil, Kent, and
Queen Anne's Counties

Finance Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

Legislative Policy Committee



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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Delores Kelley
Finance Committee
Senate Bill – 561- Electric Cooperatives – Meetings - Alterations

Dear Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 561 will allow Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) and Choptank Electric Cooperative on the Eastern Shore to hold its Annual Meeting in-person, virtually or with a combination of in-person and virtual attendance. This allows a person who is unable to attend the meeting in-person to participate virtually and still count towards the required quorum of 50 members in attendance.

Senate Bill 561 is supported by the South Maryland Delegation and the Eastern Shore Delegation.

I request the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 561.

SB561 ES Delegation Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Howard, Erika

Position: FAV

SENATORS

MARY BETH CAROZZA
ADDIE C. ECKARDT
JASON C. GALLION
STEPHEN S. HERSHEY, JR.



DELEGATES

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SHEREE SAMPLE-HUGHES

THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
EASTERN SHORE DELEGATION

TO: Finance Committee
FROM: Eastern Shore Delegation
DATE: February 18, 2021
RE: **SB 561/HB648-Electric Cooperatives-Meetings-Alterations**

**The Eastern Shore Delegation has voted in support of SB561/HB648
Sponsored by Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.**

The bill will allow Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) & Choptank Electric Cooperative on the Eastern Shore to hold its Annual Meeting in person, virtually or with a combination of in-person and virtual attendance. This will allow a person who is unable to attend the meeting in person to participate virtually and still count towards the requisite quorum of 50 members in attendance.

The Eastern Shore Delegation respectfully requests a favorable report for **SB 561/HB648**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "St. J. Arentz".

Steven J. Arentz
Chair, Eastern Shore Delegation

SB561 Southern MD Delegation Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Zachman, Olivia

Position: FAV

C. T. WILSON
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 28
HOUSE CHAIR

BRIAN CROSBY
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 29B
HOUSE VICE CHAIR

JACK BAILEY
SENATOR, DISTRICT 29

ARTHUR ELLIS
SENATOR, DISTRICT 28

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
SENATOR, DISTRICT 27



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
SOUTHERN MARYLAND DELEGATION

GERALD "JERRY" CLARK
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 29C

DEBRA M. DAVIS
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 28

MARK N. FISHER
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 27C

MATTHEW MORGAN
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 29A

EDITH J. PATTERSON
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 28

ELIZABETH "SUSIE" PROCTOR
DELEGATE, DISTRICT 27A

TO: Finance Committee

FROM: Southern Maryland Delegation

DATE: February 8, 2021

RE: **SB 561/HB 648 – Electric Cooperatives – Meetings - Alterations**

The Southern Maryland Delegation has voted in support of:

SB 561/HB 648– Electric Cooperatives – Meetings - Alterations

Bill Overview:

This bill is sponsored by **Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.** for the purpose of authorizing annual and special meetings of the members of an electric cooperative to be conducted in person, virtually, or both; requiring the notice of annual and special meetings to include certain information; altering certain requirements for a quorum; repealing a requirement that for voting to occur by mail or electronic transmission, the manner must be provided in the cooperative's bylaws; and authorizing voting to be conducted in a certain manner in accordance with the cooperative's bylaws.

Bill Outline:

1. The bill will allow Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) & Choptank Electric Cooperative on the Eastern Shore to hold its Annual Meeting in person, virtually or with a combination of in person and virtual attendance. This will allow a person who is unable to attend the meeting in person to participate virtually and still count towards the requisite quorum of 50 members in attendance.
2. The passage of this bill, would allow SMECO to propose a change to its bylaws during the 2021 Annual Meeting to reflect the change in participation requirements. If that bylaw change is adopted, the new meeting format can be implemented for the 2022 Annual Meeting.

The Southern Maryland Delegation respectfully requests a favorable report for **SB 561/HB 648**.