



SB0462 - Public Utilities – Low–Income Housing – Energy Performance Targets

Testimony before Senate Finance Committee

February 16, 2021

Position: Favorable

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Ruth Auerbach, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in ***support of SB0462*** to weatherize low-income housing. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

This bill increases the financial assistance to weatherize low-income housing through the Empower Maryland Program. Not only will improved energy efficiency make utilities more affordable for low-income residents, it will also provide funds to improve the health of the residents through improved indoor air quality. For instance, Empower Maryland funds mold remediation which reduces incidences of asthma. Currently, Empower Maryland funds are disproportionately used by wealthier households. This bill will make these funds more accessible to low-income households, improving the housing stock in the state and lowering the energy demands on the state's utilities. Hence, this bill addresses the climate crisis too.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Ruth Auerbach
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