



GLEN ECHO HEIGHTS MOBILIZATION

Committee: Finance
Sponsor: Montgomery County Delegation
Testimony on: HB0768
Position: Support
Hearing Date: March 23, 2021

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization (GEHM) submits this letter in support of the Montgomery County Community Choice Energy Pilot Program, MC17-21.

A crucial step in fighting climate change is transitioning to clean energy, and Clean Choice Energy (or CCE) would move Montgomery County ahead in its goal of achieving an 85% reduction in GHG emissions by 2027 and 100% by 2035.

Although the cost of clean energy has come down, cost considerations for individuals, businesses and public entities with limited resources continue to be a hurdle in adopting clean energy.

CCE is a tool that can be used to negotiate lower energy rates on clean energy. There are already 9 states that allow Community Choice Energy, and those communities pay less in energy costs than the standard offer service rates from the utilities.

Here in Montgomery County, lower rates on clean energy would benefit the County government by freeing up resources for other uses, such as supporting local businesses recover from the Covid19 epidemic.

And lower energy rates would greatly benefit residents, particularly low-income residents, who are disproportionately impacted by energy cost burdens and by effects of the pandemic. Low-income residents are also more vulnerable to health risks from fossil fuel pollution.

An important component of the Montgomery County Community Choice Energy Pilot Program is the fact that residents must opt-out, rather opt-in, to the program. Currently, residents who want clean energy must individually seek out clean energy options. As a residential consumer, I have been able to transition to clean energy by proactively enrolling in Clean Choice Energy and subscribing to Neighborhood Sun Community Solar. However, I know many friends and neighbors who would prefer to be consuming clean energy, but have not found the time to research the options and carry out the necessary steps to procure it. With CCE's opt-out structure, the work is done for those who want in.

Finally, purchasing clean energy on a large scale as a CCE aggregator leads to local job creation, because a CCE aggregator will be allowed to own and build the means of energy generation, and could choose to pair its electric purchases with other programs such as energy efficiency retrofits, which would require local labor.

For these reasons, we encourage a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.

Signed,
Liz Olfe Feldman