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ACTION FUND

Committee: Finance
Testimony on: HB0768 – Montgomery County – Community Choice Energy – Pilot Program
Organization: Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Submitting: Mike Tidwell
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: March 23, 2021

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB0768, Montgomery County Community Choice Energy Pilot Program. I am the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a grass~~Comm~~roots organization dedicated exclusively to raising awareness about the impacts and solutions associated with the climate crisis.

I also am a long time resident of Montgomery County and have particular interest in increasing access to clean, affordable energy for all the residents of the County. HB 0768 is a pilot program that would enable Montgomery County to negotiate on behalf of residents and businesses to both lower rates and move to a more rapid transition to renewable energy. I urge you to vote favorably on this bill.

Global warming is already evident in Montgomery County and across Maryland with unprecedented flooding and record-setting numbers of summers days over 90 degrees. A rapid transition to 100% clean, renewable energy is essential if we want to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. In 2017 Montgomery County declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2025. Community Choice Energy will help the County make great strides toward meeting these goals.

Community Choice Energy is a win for the people of Montgomery. It gives the democratically elected County officials control over where the County's energy is

sourced, and the power to negotiate lower rates for customers allowing it to both rapidly transition to renewable energy and decrease energy costs for consumers; costs which disproportionately affect our most vulnerable communities. Further, CCE can help Montgomery County protect its low-income and elderly residents who are often targeted by unscrupulous third-party energy suppliers that charge higher than standard offer service rates. That said, CCE provides for individual choice -- Individuals can opt out of CCE and continue with the utility or third party supplier of their choice.

With its pilot program, Montgomery County can meet its ambitious climate goals and pave the way for future CCE programs elsewhere in Maryland. I urge you to support this important legislation.