



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 1083 - County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act

SPONSOR: Delegate Carr, et al.

HEARING DATE: March 10, 2022

COMMITTEE: Economic Matters

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 1083 - County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act**, which authorizes a local government, subject to specified requirements, to (1) convert its street lighting service to a customer-owned street lighting tariff established under the bill; (2) submit a request to acquire "street lighting equipment," as defined, from the electric company at some or all locations within the county or municipality; and (3) enter into an agreement to purchase electricity. If the county or municipality and the electric company fail to agree to the purchase price or conditions of purchase of the street lighting equipment, the county or municipality may acquire the equipment by condemnation, subject to specified requirements.

The environmental and economic goals sought to be achieved by **House Bill 1083** are in line with the County's current policies to move towards more efficient and sustainable power options, especially when they will result in lower costs to our residents. The benefits of similar legislation have been realized in various jurisdictions across the Country. For example, California and Rhode Island have enabled local governments to purchase street lighting technology. In implementing similar regulations, these jurisdictions have observed lower maintenance costs (due to lower overhead), decreased energy usage and improved reliability because of the installation of LED bulbs. The County also supports the additional flexibility this legislation would provide to jurisdictions interested in adopting these practices. The potential benefits of this enabling legislation must be weighed against the assumption of certain risks, including taking on the responsibility of updating old equipment or incurring higher repair and maintenance costs than anticipated.

Further, the benefits of proper and more efficient lighting have been shown to reduce crime and increase the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The latter, specifically, is consistent with the County's Vision Zero program and is listed within the engineering principle's action items. Vision Zero Prince George's seeks to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all including people who bike walk, drive and use transit by 2040. Vision Zero utilizes a combination of six

essential elements education, emergency response, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, and equity – with improved lighting falling under the engineering principle.

According to the Department of Legislative Services, **House Bill 1083** will have potentially meaningful benefits for local governments that acquire street lighting equipment under the bill. While local government expenditures for street lighting equipment may increase in the short term as local governments exercise their authority to purchase street lighting equipment; over time local government expenditures may subsequently decline to the extent that local governments install low-energy bulbs, switch to customer-owned street lighting tariffs and pay separately for street lighting equipment maintenance. The amount cannot be reliably estimated at this time but is potentially significant for local governments that currently do not own some or all of the streetlights located in their jurisdictions.

Lastly, it is important to note that the bill is enabling legislation and does not compel any county or municipality to do anything. It provides an authorization for action, should they decide it is the proper course for them.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 1083** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.