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BILL NO.: **House Bill 88**

TITLE: **Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Charkoudian**

COMMITTEE: **Economic Matters**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 3, 2022**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 88 – Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards. This legislation would establish labor standards for contractors and subcontractors working within energy projects and help ensure that Maryland’s electrical distribution system can support clean, efficient and reliable sources of energy.

The need for sustainable sources of energy is urgent. Maryland has lead this initiative mandating ambitious renewable energy goals, supporting the growth of solar energy, and approving Offshore Renewable Energy Credits for the creation of four wind projects. The rapid growth in the clean energy market has created a need for local supporting facilities and subsequently, a new demand for a workforce to stand up these projects. Some of these facilities are poised to come to Baltimore County which will create new opportunities for local skilled workers. It a priority for the County that all those working on emerging energy projects housed locally and throughout the State are protected by strict labor standards.

House Bill 88 ensures the protection of workers by mandating that electric and gas companies require project contractors or subcontractors to pay a prevailing wage and offer health insurance. The legislation also requires that those contractors working on energy projects plan for the recruitment of residents with special consideration for veterans, women, minority individuals, and returning citizens. The goals describe in this bill are complimentary to the plans of Baltimore County as it works to increase its use of renewable energy, ramp up electrical vehicle infrastructure, and see the further electrification of residential and commercial equipment.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 88. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.