



TESTIMONY FOR SB0525

Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards

Bill Sponsor: Senator Feldman

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0525 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Due to the one-time federal infrastructure funding that Maryland will receive to support grid improvements along with the grant funding from the Department of Energy to support grid modernization, we need to be smart about how we plan to update and modernize our energy grid. The current process that the Public Service Commission (PSC) uses to plan for updates to the grid is not inclusive, and many of the people who are affected by these updates don't have visibility or a voice in the process. Additionally, we must make sure that we spend the federal infrastructure money wisely as we are in a tipping point with climate change and we need to focus much more heavily on having the grid support the green energy that we will rely on in the future.

This bill will bring more voices into the planning process, including –

- Residential and commercial energy customers
- Low-income communities
- Environmental advocacy groups
- Labor unions
- Industry experts in electric vehicles, distributed energy resources, and distribution planning

It also will provide guidelines for the process and help direct federal infrastructure funding, as well as promote and support family-sustaining jobs with prevailing wages and health and retirement benefits.

We have a lot of work to do to support our clean energy expansion, develop resiliency hubs, manage peak demand on our grid, and so much more. The planning process for the update and modernization of our energy grid could not be more important right now. We need to get this right and the PSC should not do this alone. Everyone who has a stake in the outcome should have a voice in the process.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.