



**HoCoClimateAction.org**  
Howard County, Maryland

**Testimony for SB525 - Public Utilities - .org**

**Hearing Date: February 15, 2022**

**Bill Sponsor: Senator Feldman**

**Committee: Senate Finance**

**Submitting: Ruth White for Howard County Climate Action**

**Position: Favorable with amendments**

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing more than 1,450 subscribers, and a member of the Howard County Climate Collaboration.

On behalf of Howard County Climate Action, I urge a favorable report from the committee on SB525 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards

As we learned in the IPCC conference in Glasgow, it is critical that all (especially we in Maryland, who are so vulnerable to climate disruption and sea-level rise) do more to reach our current greenhouse gas reductions goals. To do this we must increase renewable energy in Maryland. We have long advocated for increased wind and solar energy. We must assure that federal funds, as well as state resources, are devoted to increasing the current limited grid distribution capacity. Specifically, as a start, Maryland needs to use federal funds from the federal infrastructure bill which allocates funds for updating the electrical grid.

This bill works along with the Public Service Commission's Distribution System Planning process by providing valuable guidelines, supporting inclusive stakeholder engagement, and directing federal infrastructure funding to support this important work. We know there are limits now on the number of community solar projects in certain areas. And one member of our group in Howard County hit BGE limits in expanding electrification in his home.

Distributed renewable energy resources will benefit all by allowing shifts away from polluting fossil fuel plants. We must have a process for making these important decisions about the grid that involve residential and business customers, vulnerable overburdened and low-income communities, climate activists as well as labor and industry experts, a broad table of those impacted.

Thank you for your consideration of SB525. For all the reasons stated above, I urge a favorable vote from the committee.

HoCo Climate Action

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Submitted by Ruth White, Steering and Advocacy Committee, Columbia MD

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