

**Committee: Finance**

**Testimony on: SB525**

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

**Organization: (self)**

**Submitting: Thomas Potyraj**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 15, 2022**

Chairmen Kelley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of SB525. Maryland's energy grid can be a key tool in fighting climate change. This bill would allow planning for Maryland's energy distribution grid to support the state's goals of green-house gas reduction and decarbonization, while increasing energy distribution resiliency, reliability, and cost-effectiveness.

The bill will also require the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Maryland Energy Administration to coordinate with utilities regarding federal infrastructure grid improvement funding. With federal infrastructure funds coming to Maryland, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity for grid investments that will help us meet our state goals. Modernization of Maryland's energy distribution grid could facilitate transition to renewable energy and electrification of building/transportation sectors.

States nationwide are prioritizing grid modernization while increasing renewable energy goals, adjusting to climate threats, and planning for a future with increasing electricity needs. An increasing number of state legislatures are requiring their public service commissions, in the utility planning processes, to support state climate goals, expansion of distributed energy resources (solar, storage, wind), a public participatory process, transparency of data, local labor, safety and reliability. Illinois, New York, Colorado, California, and Nevada, among others, have all used legislation to set clear parameters for a distribution planning process<sup>1</sup>.

SB525 will help Maryland undertake the improvements needed to have a resilient electricity grid that supports rapid electrification, a clean-energy economy, and workers for the future. I support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources cited by <https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/maryland-chapter/GRID%20Act-%20Partners%20factsheet%202022-SC.pdf>