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VIA EMAIL

Senator Delores Kelley
Chair
Senator Brian Feldman
Vice-Chair
Senate Finance Committee

**Re: SB 524 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation
Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing**

Dear Senator Kelley and Senator Feldman:

I write to express the Office of People Counsel's support of Senate Bill 524, Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs - Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing. OPC supports SB 524 requirements for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to procure or provide energy efficiency and conservation (EE&C) programs and services for electricity customers for the 2022-2024 EmPOWER Maryland Program cycle. The EE&C programs and services must be designed to achieve a target annual incremental gross energy savings of at least 0.4% per year, compared to 2019, starting in 2023.

OPC supports SB 524's intent that an extension of the EmPOWER Program beyond 2023 should target annual incremental gross energy savings increases to 0.53% in 2024, 0.72% in 2025 and 1% in 2026. The bill accounts for the unique challenges of low-income program delivery and facilitates EmPOWER Maryland's delivery of energy savings benefits to low-income populations. The benefits to low-income customers from energy efficiency activities and weatherization improvements contribute to customers' well-being and lower costs for essential energy services.

OPC looks forward to participating in the Green and Healthy Task Force created by SB 524 with government and public sector stakeholders to examine low-income housing and energy needs. The Green and Healthy Task Force will present

recommendations on these critical issues to the Governor and the General Assembly next year.

OPC asks the Finance Committee to grant SB 524 with a favorable report. We thank the Committee for your continued efforts on this matter.

Sincerely,



David S. Lapp
People's Counsel