



Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony on: HB0891 - Independent Study of the Public Service Commission (PSC Study Act of 2023)
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable with Amendments
Hearing Date: March 9, 2023

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB891.

HB891 requires the Public Service Commission (Commission) to contract with an independent entity to conduct a study of and make recommendations on the staffing capacity, structural organization, processes, and strategic focus of the Commission by July 1, 2024. The Commission must report its findings and recommendations related to internal procedures, regulations, or statutory changes to the Governor and the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee, the House Economic Matters Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee, and provide three subsequent updates on the implementation of the recommendations to those committees.

The Commission, which was established in 1910 to regulate public utilities (e.g., gas, electric, water, sewage, and telecommunications) and certain transportation (e.g., taxis, rail carriers), has seen its mission expand and evolve in recent years. The Commission’s mission now includes not only rate-setting, public safety, and reliability, but also the “economic, environmental, climate, and labor impacts of all matters before the Commission.” Since the passage of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 and other bills which set ambitious goals for Maryland’s clean energy transition, this is a critical time to examine the Commission’s staffing, organization, processes, and strategic focus to make sure it has all the tools needed to make a smooth, equitable, and successful clean energy transition.

Bringing in independent experts to conduct such an evaluation is crucial to ensure a broad and unbiased perspective. HB891 provides for an independent and comprehensive study that will take into account a broad range of input and perspectives. The study will inform not only the

Commission itself, but just as importantly the new Moore-Miller Administration and the General Assembly who will make future decisions about budget and policy.

The Climate Justice Wing supports the goals of HB891 and recognizes the importance of getting the study underway quickly to modernize Maryland's Public Service Commission for the challenges of climate change and a just and successful clean energy transition. For these reasons, we urge a **FAVORABLE** report in committee for HB891.