

STATE OF MARYLAND



OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

JASON M. STANEK

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

March 7, 2023

Chair C.T. Wilson  
Economic Matters Committee  
House Office Building, Room 231  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB 891 – INFORMATION – Independent Study of the Public Service Commission  
(PSC Study Act of 2023)**

Dear Chair Wilson and Committee Members:

Maryland is a national leader in climate and energy policy. The Public Service Commission participates in or oversees many of these policies, in addition to the daily regulation of public service companies. As a quasi-judicial economic regulator, the Commission's workload is highly technical and specialized. In recognition of its need to continue to meet the needs of the state, ratepayers, and the entities it regulates, the Commission established a broad stakeholder process in 2022 (Public Conference 57), which is currently studying issues that are like those described in HB 891. Since a current study is underway, I would like to highlight areas of duplication and make suggestions on how to improve HB 891.

The existing study process was launched in July 2022 and the PC57 Work Group has met several times since then. On December 22, 2022, the leaders of this Work Group filed a preliminary report describing its initial findings. The issues covered by the Work Group included:

1. Recommendations on the appropriate staffing and resources required for the Commission to meet its current statutory charges;
2. recommendations on additional information services or technology that could enable the Commission to meet its current statutory charges more easily;
3. the willingness of stakeholders to ensure adequate funding for Commission staff and resources;
4. how a Commission enhanced with additional staff and resources could lead to better public policy outcomes;
5. how the Commission could more effectively fund, attract, and retain staff and resources; and
6. other staffing and resource issues the Commission should consider as part of any workforce enhancement effort.

The Work Group consists of representatives from electric and gas utilities, the Office of People's Counsel, retail energy suppliers, environmental advocates, and the Commission's Technical Staff. All parties support the finding that the Commission should pursue all means within its authority to ensure adequate funding for additional staff (i.e., PINS) and resources. The recommendations included in the preliminary report were consensus recommendations. The PC57 Work Group also discussed several other ideas that may be explored in future discussions. Separately, the Commission is currently pursuing its request for additional PINS through a supplemental budget request and plans to address the remaining Work Group recommendations soon. The full record of PC57, including the preliminary report, can be found at <https://webpsc.psc.state.md.us/DMS/pc/PC57>.

The Commission is already addressing the issues outlined in HB 891 through PC57. If the General Assembly is interested in pursuing the proposed legislation, I recommend that it be amended to give the Commission flexibility regarding the scope of the study to avoid duplication and ensure an effective use of resources. Additionally, the Bill should be revised to clarify that the Commission may not be required to implement all the recommendations of the study, as some may require action by the Governor and General Assembly.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide information on HB 891. Please contact Lisa Smith, Director of Legislative Affairs, at (410) 336-6288 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jason M. Stanek  
Chairman