



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**SB 689**

**DATE: February 28, 2023**

**SPONSOR: Senator Lewis Young**

**ASSIGNED TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**CONTACT PERSON: Garrett Fitzgerald (garrett.fitzgerald@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: Support**

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### **Public Utilities – Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions – Alterations and Requirements**

This bill will reform the EmPOWER Maryland statewide building energy savings program to achieve deeper reductions in greenhouse (GHG) emissions, accelerate the transition to high efficiency electric technologies, and support low-income families in navigating and benefiting from State programs.

EmPOWER Maryland has driven energy efficiency improvements in buildings throughout Maryland for more than a decade. The program is now poised to play a more prominent role in helping to achieve state and local climate goals.

This bill will establish new GHG reduction goals for EmPOWER Maryland and will direct the Public Service Commission (PSC) to reform the program to:

- provide incentives for electric heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and related appliances;
- discontinue incentives for gas combustion equipment, while maintaining incentives for other energy efficiency improvements in buildings that use gas; and
- ensure that program funding is primarily used to improve building energy performance in ways that will directly benefit customers.

The bill also directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to contract with navigators to help low-income families participate in weatherization, electrification, lead removal, and mold and asbestos remediation. This service will be valuable for many eligible families who struggle to learn about and access these programs.

This bill provides important policy direction to guide the PSC's administration of EmPOWER Maryland. The resulting program will benefit Montgomery County residents and property owners.

We respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 689.