



Hearing Date: February 28, 2023

Testimony on SB689 – POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Utilities – Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions
- Alterations and Requirements
(Energy Savings Act)

To: Chair Feldman and Members, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
From: The Jewish Community Relations Council, Howard County, MD
Betsy Singer and Laura Salganik, Co-Chairs

The JCRC of Howard County is submitting this testimony in support of SB689, the Energy Savings Act. Repair of the world (*tikkun olam*) is a guiding tenant of our Jewish faith. We are compelled to act to prevent massive changes to the Earth’s climate as we face rising temperatures due to excessive carbon, methane and other greenhouse gases trapped in Earth’s atmosphere.

SB689 is critical to implementation of the goals of the Climate Solutions Act of 2022. This bill alters the requirements of EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Program by focusing on significant reductions in greenhouse gas, emissions, instead of reductions in energy consumption, regardless of the source. By making this change, the bill eliminates earlier incentives for gas, propane, oil and other GHG emissions and refocuses on readying homes for electrification.

This bill incentivizes electrification and provides more support to low/moderate income to take advantage of home upgrades by including a program for State-issued rebates for residential electrification upgrades and provision for coordination with federal rebates now available. The program for “navigators” to assist owners with retrofits concerning lead, asbestos removal, mold remediation, and improved air quality would help eliminate current problems that must be repaired before a house can be weatherized and made ready for energy efficient upgrades.

This bill can go far in lowering the carbon footprint of individual homeowners and can also help to improve the health of Marylanders who suffer from asthma and other lung conditions aggravated by the toxic emissions of gas stoves in the home. Requiring the Public Service Commission and the Department of Housing and Community Development to move in the same direction will greatly improve the health and well-being of the people of Maryland by reducing GHG emissions and moving toward clean energy solutions for the climate crisis.