



March 22, 2023

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 459, Legislative Initiative to Establish the County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act

Dear Senator Feldman, Senator Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), I am writing to offer our support for HB 459, which establishes a process by which local governments may improve service and reduce costs by choosing a maintenance or LED upgrade provider. Additionally, CEEPC requests that the bill be amended to restore the original language as introduced in the House.

Climate change is a regional priority for COG, the association of local governments in metropolitan Washington. The bill's passage will directly assist Maryland municipalities in improving energy efficiency and making progress toward our regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. As introduced, the bill followed the approach used successfully in the District of Columbia, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island to resolve valuation disputes. It would enable local governments and municipalities to convert their streetlighting service to customer-owned streetlighting tariffs, establish an orderly process for putting a value on streetlights acquired from a utility, streamline the process for resolving any disputes, and provide Maryland's local governments additional control over the cost, quality, and efficiency of their streetlighting fixtures. Streetlighting is a significant energy expense for local jurisdictions. The bill's passage would allow Maryland municipalities to use energy-efficient lights in their operations and reduce their carbon footprint.

Additionally, COG, worked together with the Maryland Energy Administration, Clean Energy Solutions, Inc., Virginia Energy, and the National Association of State Energy Officials, on an initiative to facilitate local government adoption of LED streetlights. The County and Municipal Street Light Investment Act would greatly facilitate these efforts by removing barriers to local governments adopting more energy-efficient street lighting.

COG supports your efforts to enable local governments to upgrade streetlights to be more energy efficient, which aligns with our legislative priorities. Please contact Jeffrey King, COG Director of Climate, Energy, and Air Programs, at (202) 962-3238 or jking@mwkog.org if you have any questions. I appreciate your consideration.

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 22, 2023

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Takis Karantonis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single blue stroke.

Takis Karantonis
Chair, Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee

cc: Honorable Aaron Kaufman