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**SB0144 Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs -
Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing
FAVORABLE
Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee**

January 31, 2023

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee. I am Mary Lee Olsen, a member of and lead advocate for AARP Maryland. AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security and supporting energy efficiency for seniors and low-income households in the state of Maryland.

AARP MD and its almost 870,000 members support SB Public Utilities – Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs – Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing. We thank you Senator Feldman for sponsoring this critical piece of legislation.

According to the Maryland Low Energy Burden Report, low-income households pay 13% of their income on energy costs. Nationally, low-income residents pay 8% of their income. **Maryland lags other states.**

This bill will set a standard for 1% of annual energy savings and demand reduction targets for low-income households, administered under the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The bill will increase EMPOWER funding to DHCD to support low-income improvements by 2030. Additional funding from federal and state under the Inflation Reduction Act will support building efficiency audits and retrofits.

The legislature has an opportunity to fix the low-incomes disparity by voting for a plan of 1% of energy savings and demand reduction targets per year.

We request a favorable report for SB0144. For questions or additional information, please contact Tammy Bresnahan, AARP Maryland State Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

