



**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Testimony on:** SB0689 - Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions - Alterations and Requirements  
**Organization:** Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition  
**Submitting:** Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair  
**Position:** Favorable  
**Hearing Date:** February 28, 2023

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB689. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on SB689 including the sponsor's amendments.

The Energy Savings Act of 2023 (SB689), will strengthen the original EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act, passed in 2008 to incentivize energy efficiency and energy conservation, and will help Maryland meet its ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. While the current EmPOWER Program has improved energy efficiency, saved customers money, and reduced GHG emissions, it needs to be updated to move the State away from fossil fuels and toward energy efficient electrification of appliances and home space and water heating.

SB689 sets clear performance targets and climate benchmarks, and includes incentives and penalties for utilities to meet these goals. In addition, the bill will make homes healthier, through weatherization and health and safety improvements such as lead removal, mold remediation, asbestos removal, and other building improvements.

The Climate Justice Wing supports policies that benefit overburdened and underserved communities, so we are particularly excited about the Energy Savings Act's provisions to expand EmPOWER's reach into these communities by creating a multilingual community outreach specialist program for low-wealth communities. We also strongly support the bill's provisions to expand the network of contractors eligible to participate in EmPOWER, and the ongoing education, outreach, training, and certification for contractors to deliver services and ensure the most vulnerable communities realize the greatest benefits.

Together, these measures and program improvements will move Maryland more aggressively toward its energy use and GHG emissions reduction goals, save customers money, and put a greater focus on the low-income communities that have historically received the fewest benefits. We urge the Committee to recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for SB689.