



March 27, 2023

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
c/o Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair

RE: Support for House Bill 459, with amendments

Dear Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Chevy Chase Village hereby submits our support of House Bill 459, the County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act, with amendments, specifically, deletion of the amendments made by Del. Wivell and restoration of the provisions related to the net book value method for calculating the cost of existing street lighting equipment. The Village supports the bill as originally introduced in the House. The original bill uses the net book value (cost minus depreciation), which is the industry standard method to establish the value of utility-owned lights and is the formula used in the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island, and in the District of Columbia.

The Maryland General Assembly established the policy of allowing municipal acquisition of utility owned streetlights in 2007. However, despite a good deal of interest, in 16 years, no Maryland municipality has successfully acquired utility-owned overhead streetlights. Overall, this enabling legislation will streamline the process for local governments that are currently utility-owned overhead streetlights. Conversion of utility-owned street lighting to customer-owned lighting is a best practice proven to improve service reliability and reduce costs. Ownership of the streetlights would allow local governments to transition to LED technology, which would also have the benefit of reducing energy consumption.

A group of municipalities within Montgomery and Prince George’s counties are currently negotiating with our local electric utility—PEPCO—on the terms of a pole attachment agreement as directed by the Maryland Public Service Commission. We are due to provide a report on these negotiations to the commission on April 7. These negotiations are, however, independent of the relief and surety that HB459 would provide in the streetlight purchasing process for statewide application.

Bill 459 strengthens the original Maryland law enacted in 2007. The Maryland Municipal League and individual municipalities were instrumental in getting the original Maryland

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legislation passed in 2007 and have supported subsequent efforts to strengthen the law, many of whom are also lending their support to Bill 459.

We urge you to issue a favorable report for HB 459, with amendments.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Gary B. Crockett, consisting of the initials 'GBC' followed by a stylized signature.

Gary B. Crockett
Board Treasurer (and Street Lighting Lead)
Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers

cc: Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Delegate Aaron Kaufman (District 18)
Maryland Municipal League