



TESTIMONY FOR SB0781
Offshore Wind Energy – State Goals and Procurement (Promoting Offshore Wind Energy Resources Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hester

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0781 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

Question: What is clean, renewable energy really? Answer: Energy that does not harm the environment and can be regenerated daily, otherwise known as solar and wind power. These are two types of renewable, clean energy that we need to really build up in Maryland.

Building more offshore wind in Maryland will bring family sustaining careers to Maryland, lower energy costs, improve health outcomes and slash our carbon pollution. The POWER Act sets Maryland up to be a leader in offshore wind by making necessary upgrades to our grid, setting an ambitious goal of 8.5 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2031, strengthening labor standards, and building another gigawatt of offshore wind in existing lease areas.

Right now, offshore wind developers are looking up and down the east coast for where they should invest, and Maryland does not look competitive. While New Jersey has set a goal of 11.5 gigawatts of offshore wind and New York has set a goal of 9 gigawatts, Maryland only currently plans to build 2 gigawatts of offshore wind. Our grid lacks the capability of handling large additions of offshore wind, and we currently have no plan to create that capability. Our state could become a central hub of offshore wind development up and down the east coast, but not without additional action. By passing the POWER Act we can put Maryland back in the running as a location worthy of offshore wind development and investment.

What the POWER Act can do for Maryland:

More Jobs - The POWER Act would bring even more jobs to Maryland by immediately increasing the number of offshore wind turbines being built in the near-term and making the necessary investments to grow this industry in the long term.

More Savings - If Maryland were to build 8.5 gigawatts of offshore wind, it could save Marylanders \$4.7 billion over 30 years in reduced energy costs, and could save Marylanders as much as \$28.5 billion when accounting for environmental and health benefits.

Lower Costs - The POWER Act would also lower energy costs by initiating a planning process for shared offshore wind transmission infrastructure. By initiating a long term, coordinated transmission planning process New Jersey saved its ratepayers \$900 million. That is exactly the kind of cost savings The POWER Act would bring for Maryland ratepayers.

Less Pollution - Building more offshore wind will help Maryland cut air pollutants such as NO₂ and PM 2.5 which have a silent but deadly effect on our state. Air pollution causes and exacerbates asthma. Air pollution is one reason that Maryland has an asthma rate that is 25% higher than the national average, and Baltimore City has an asthma rate nearly three times the national average.

The POWER Act is good policy that will create union jobs, lower energy costs, improve health outcomes, and help Maryland meet our climate targets. It will help attract new investments from developers who are looking to see which states will be leaders in offshore wind energy. It is supported by unions, developers, climate advocates, justice groups, and consumer protection groups. It is one of the most important pieces of legislation this year.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.