



TESTIMONY FOR SB0689

Public Utilities - Energy Efficiency and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions - Alterations and Requirements

Bill Sponsor: Senator Lewis Young

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 SB0689 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.

This bill is designed to strengthen the original EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act, passed in 2008 to incentivize energy efficiency and energy conservation. It 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.

Additionally, the Energy Savings Act's provisions to expand EmPOWER's reach into low-income and overburdened/underserved communities by creating a multilingual community outreach specialist is an important addition that will help those communities take advantage of the program. 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.

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