



GREATER WASHINGTON
Board of Trade

HB0579– Critical Infrastructure Streamlining Act of 2024
House Economic Matters Committee
Position: **Favorable**
Greater Washington Board of Trade
February 20, 2024

Dear Chairman Wilson and Committee Members,

The Greater Washington Board of Trade is a pro-business and non-partisan organization supporting all industry sectors in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, having done so for the last 134 years. We support HB0579.

As the region moves forward in increasing efficiencies in energy production and utilization, it is important to maintain an eye on regional viability for industry. That is, necessary improvements to energy infrastructure and efficiency will only be effective if they do not simultaneously drive industry away from Maryland to less restrictive jurisdictions. One low-impact mechanism for mitigating consistency and growing pain risks associated with developing relatively more renewable energy mixes is to allow industry to make use of traditional backup power generation in the event of unforeseen outages.

Fossil fuel backup generators, especially when they are rarely if ever used, offer reassurance that business can continue as normal through brief interruptions to power delivery as the energy infrastructure is continually improved without substantial impact on environmental impact. Diesel generators, by far the most utilized backup generators even offer efficiency ratings commensurate with or better than natural gas energy production, especially when accounting for thermal efficiency losses associated with power delivery.

Maryland should continue to innovate with regard to energy infrastructure, in both delivery and production, but that must not come at the cost of driving away the economic drivers providing state revenue to fund those changes. Simple solutions allowing industry to provide itself insurance against energy interruptions, especially in the case of critical infrastructure like hospital systems and data centers important to the health and security of Marylanders as well as that of the broader region and nation offer dramatic upside at very little cost.

Fundamentally, this legislation stands to improve the business environment in Maryland while allowing for substantially greater leeway in making improvements to the state's energy infrastructure without interrupting the ability of residents to continue doing business. This represents a clear step toward meeting Maryland's environmental goals while sustaining the business environment necessary to fund the remaining steps down that long road. Please support HB0579.