



**Testimony to The SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**HB 864 - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plans**

**POSITION: Support**

**By: Linda T. Kohn, President**

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Since the emergence of the environment movement in the 1970's, the League of Women Voters has advocated for policies that protect our planet, promote public health, and advance equity. The League believes in advancing the renewable energy transition by emphasizing energy efficiency and conservation.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland **supports HB 864 as amended in the House of Delegates**, which would enact critical updates to the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act in order to bring the program in line with Maryland's climate goals. The EmPOWER program currently only measures its goals in electricity savings, but this only accounts for a part of the picture. Maryland has established goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 60% by 2031 and reach net-zero by 2045. In order to meet these goals, the Public Service Commission must facilitate the transition away from fossil fuel use. **HB 864** would require the Public Service Commission to set GHG emissions reduction goals for utility companies, and establish a plan to meet those goals.

**HB 864** promotes equity by continuing and expanding EmPOWER's emphasis on providing financial incentives for energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades. Increasing energy efficiency saves consumers money by lowering their energy bills, which particularly benefits low-income households burdened by high energy bills. **HB 864** would also emphasize community outreach to help low-income households access the program's incentives.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland strongly urges a **favorable report on HB 864**.