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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

February 21, 2024

Chair Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 532 – Favorable with Amendments – Commission to Advance Lithium–Ion Battery Safety in Maryland

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

During the 2023 Legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 910, which requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) to establish the Maryland Energy Storage Program and set targets for the cost-effective deployment of new energy storage devices in the State with a goal of achieving at least a cumulative total of 3,000 MW by the end of 2033. The program must be implemented by July 1, 2025. To meet the mandates of HB 910, the PSC established the Energy Storage Program Working Group. The safety of energy storage devices will be contemplated in the Working Group's development of regulations. However, SB 532 will allow for further research and guidance to be available directly related to lithium-ion batteries. The Public Service Commission requests a favorable report on SB 532, with a few amendments.

The Public Service Commission recommends expansion of the membership of the Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety to include representatives of the Public Service Commission, the Power Plant Research Program of the Department of Natural Resources and the Building Codes Administration.

Further, the PSC recommends the bill language include the study of standards, as well as decommissioning, in the Commission's scope. Currently the bill language requires the new Commission to study and make recommendations on training, education and other information to better inform the general public. The Public Service Commission recommends the language be expanded to include training and education for first responders.

Finally, the Public Service Commission requests an amendment for an interim report to be issued on the progress and status of the Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety by the December 31, 2024. This will be helpful to the PSC's Energy Storage Program Working Group as it develops safety standards as prerequisites for approval in the permanent Energy Storage Program.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide favorable testimony, with amendments on SB 532. Please contact the Commission's Director of Legislative Affairs, Christina M. Ochoa, at christina.ochoa1@maryland.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frederick H. Hoover". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'F'.

Frederick H. Hoover, Chair
Maryland Public Service Commission