



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0682

### Limitations on Cost Recovery by Public Service Companies and Reports on Votes Cast at Meetings of Regional Transmission Organizations (Utility Transparency and Accountability 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 SB0682 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

There have been many pieces of legislation passed and rules enacted to try to get governmental agencies in Maryland to be transparent. There are rules about meeting notifications and rules about releasing information on websites and other mediums. But transparency remains a problem.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is a key regulatory agency that controls the buildout of fossil fuel infrastructure in the state. Given the fact that fossil fuels are killing us and our planet, the state has moved decisively and strongly in the direction of phasing out fossil fuels. And yet there are members of the Public Service Commission who do not see the wisdom of phasing out fossil fuel infrastructure, and based on decisions made in the last year, are very much in favor of continuing to support the fossil fuel industry and build out even more fossil fuel infrastructure.

The bill will require the Public Service Commission to do two things –

- Provide transparency into the voting on projects bought before the PSC
- Provide the reasoning behind how the votes are in the best interest of the public that they serve
- Prohibit them from using funds received from ratepayer dollars for trade association dues, advertising, board member expenses, and gifts, and to provide reports on costs incurred

Passing this bill will provide much-needed transparency into the process, and hopefully through that transparency, ensure that the PSC is actually working in the best interests of the public.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.