



DORCHESTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INC.

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March 20, 2024

House Bill 864 - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plans
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 W Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Opposition to HB 864 by Delegates Crosby & Qj:
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plans

Dear Chair Feldman:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce to offer to request an unfavorable finding for HB 864.

The bill adds Choptank Electric Cooperative (Choptank) to the EmPOWER program for the first time. Choptank is a small electric distribution company, and this change will cause electric bills for families to increase by \$200-\$400 per year. The EmPOWER surcharge will have to be set somewhere between \$20 and \$35 per month, which will be an 18% increase on an average residential electric bill.

Choptank serves some of the lowest income areas of the state. While they provide service in 9 counties, they are in the most rural portions of those counties, with an average of only 8 customers per mile. Choptank is a not-for-profit company formed to serve families and farm businesses left behind by for-profit electric companies in the 1930s. All the revenue to run the cooperative comes from the member-owners.

This increase would create a significant hardship for their members.

For the reasons listed above we request an Unfavorable Report on House Bill 864.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

William A. Christopher
President/CEO