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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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**Testimony in Support of HB1420: Cybersecurity - Office of People's Counsel, Public Service Companies, Public Service Commission, and Maryland Cybersecurity Council  
March 28, 2024**

Chair Feldman and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, it is my pleasure to come before you and offer testimony in favor of **House Bill 1420: Cybersecurity - Office of People's Counsel, Public Service Companies, Public Service Commission, and Maryland Cybersecurity Council**. As amended, this bill codifies the Office of People's Counsel's (OPC) ability to retain cybersecurity expertise as needed and sets standard definitions of critical software, supply chain risk, zero-trust, cyber resilience, and critical infrastructure.

This proposed legislation stems from a 2021 report from the Office of the Attorney General and the Maryland Cybersecurity Council. This report, authored by Laura Corcoran, an NSA Fellow, identified several recommendations to improve the security, resilience, and reliability of Maryland's electric distribution systems, known as "the electric grid." Some of the broader recommendations from the report were adopted last year, while other important standards and definitions were omitted. As our electric grid continues to undergo major transformations and our dependence on the electric grid grows, cybersecurity measures must be updated regularly. The definitions and standards set in this bill are critical to the successful modernization of our electric grid, a vital component of Maryland's strategy to meet our ambitious clean energy goals. The Public Service Commission, responsible for regulating electric utilities and evaluating the cybersecurity practices of utility companies, has advised that the updated regulations can be implemented within the current budget.

The industry has expressed concern that this bill will conflict with federal regulations. However, the scope of this legislation is specific to distribution systems, which do not fall under federal jurisdiction, and have been left to the states to regulate. Additionally, this bill will have no bearing on the cybersecurity report mandated by last year's legislation, which is due by July 1st of this year and every two years thereafter. The changes made in this bill would not take effect until October 1st, well after the report submission deadline and well before the next deadline. According to industry experts on the MD Cybersecurity Council, the proposed legislation is well within Maryland's jurisdiction and will have no bearing on the implementation of last year's bill.

I urge a favorable report on **House Bill 1420: Cybersecurity - Office of People's Counsel, Public Service Companies, Public Service Commission, and Maryland Cybersecurity Council**. Thank you.