



Testimony of Aaron Bast  
Business Manager and Financial Secretary-Treasurer, Ironworkers Local 5

HB 505 / SB 434 – The ENERGIZE Maryland Act

Before the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee and House  
Economic Matters Committee

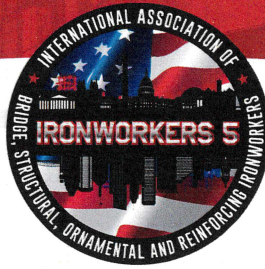
Favorable

Chairs Feldman and Wilson, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of Ironworkers Local 5, representing the highly skilled union ironworkers who build and maintain Maryland's energy and infrastructure projects, I submit this testimony in support of HB 505 / SB 434, the ENERGIZE Maryland Act, with a strong endorsement of its workforce and energy reliability provisions. This legislation is a critical next step toward ensuring Maryland's clean energy future, securing long-term union jobs, and investing in modern energy infrastructure that prioritizes both reliability and affordability.

Maryland is at a crossroads in its energy transition. With the state moving toward a 100% clean electricity goal, it is imperative that we expand and modernize our energy portfolio while ensuring stable, well-paying jobs for the workforce responsible for building that infrastructure. The addition of nuclear energy as a designated clean energy source in the Clean Energy Portfolio Standard is a critical element of this bill, providing a stable, carbon-free, and high-output energy source that ensures reliability during the transition away from fossil fuels. Furthermore, the establishment of a procurement process for advanced nuclear reactors will drive investment in next-generation nuclear technologies, supporting the fabrication, assembly, and erection of new energy infrastructure that will require highly skilled ironworkers.

The bill also improves offshore wind energy procurement by eliminating outdated statutory price caps, allowing the Public Service Commission (PSC) to establish reference pricing that prevents companies from artificially bidding up costs. This change ensures greater competition, fairer pricing, and maximum benefits for Marylanders. Additionally, relaxing the Delmarva Peninsula interconnection requirement creates greater flexibility for offshore wind developers to optimize energy transmission while maintaining commitments to in-state economic investment. The inclusion of modest penalties for project cancellations ensures that Maryland does not bear the financial burden of failed projects, as seen in New Jersey with Ørsted's Ocean Wind cancellations. These improvements help sustain good union jobs in fabrication, assembly, and steel erection associated with offshore wind infrastructure.



For solar energy development, this bill takes a necessary step to ensure competitiveness with neighboring states. Currently, Maryland's Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) lack sufficient market value to drive investment, leading to an underdeveloped solar sector. By freezing the Alternative Compliance Payment (ACP) at the 2024 level of \$60, the bill provides needed price stability that incentivizes local solar project development while ensuring competitive wages and opportunities for union workers involved in solar infrastructure construction.

Additionally, this bill mandates a review in 2032 by the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) and the PSC on the effectiveness of multipliers and ACP freezes, ensuring that Maryland remains on track to achieving 100% clean electricity and that clean energy investments result in tangible benefits for workers and consumers alike.

As ironworkers, we understand that energy infrastructure is only as strong as the workforce that builds it. Maryland must ensure that the transition to clean energy does not come at the cost of stable, union jobs. The ENERGIZE Maryland Act protects these jobs, promotes energy security, and prioritizes investment in domestic energy manufacturing, fabrication, and assembly.

For these reasons, Ironworkers Local 5 urges a favorable report on HB 505 / SB 434.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aaron Bast  
Business Manager & Financial Secretary-Treasurer  
Ironworkers Local 5