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**February 21, 2025**

**Support HB 1225 - The Affordable Grid Act**

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports HB 1225, The Affordable Grid Act, and thanks Delegate Qi for introducing this important bill.

Maryland is anticipating an increase in energy demand in the coming years. We have an opportunity now to make sure the distribution grid is ready, resilient, and able to deliver electricity to people's homes, businesses, and our public buildings as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

There is also a need to modernize the grid to take advantage of new technologies that can save ratepayers money by managing supply and demand, which include distributed rooftop solar, battery storage, bidirectional EV charging, and Virtual Power Plant agreements. There are also technologies that utilities can add to their distribution grid, including non-wires solutions such as software programs that manage load that can increase the stability and reliability of the grid at a lower cost than building new poles and wires. And most, if not all, of these modern technologies that reduce demand from utility-scale generation can be added to the grid more quickly than additional utility-scale generation.

We recognize that the Public Service Commission (PSC) has an active working group addressing the Distribution Planning System, but the consensus items of the workgroup have not gone far enough or fast enough to contribute to the 21st century grid that we need. HB 1225, The Affordable Grid Act, recommends several important initiatives that the workgroup has discussed, but haven't reached consensus. A consensus-driven process is important for the complex and multidimensional issues the PSC addresses, but it also means that any one member participating in the workgroup can vote "no" and halt the advancement of the recommendations.

The Affordable Grid Act establishes "Best Practice" system planning requirements, accountability, and assures the protection of critical grid information. As we invest in and deploy more clean energy and battery storage, we must be building a 21st century grid.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on HB 1225, the Affordable Grid Act.