



SIERRA CLUB

MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB 0121, Electric Companies - Regional Transmission Organizations - Report (Utility Transparency and Accountability Act)

Position: Support

Hearing Date: January 23, 2025

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 0121. This bill provides greater transparency regarding actions undertaken by Maryland utilities within the multistate, quasi-governmental electricity regional transmission organization (RTO) known as PJM Interconnection (PJM).

PJM's role in Maryland's electricity sector

PJM exerts significant control over the electricity sector, including decisions as to what new large electricity generation facilities can connect to the grid in Maryland. These decisions impact the development of clean energy, including solar and wind power. PJM's rules regarding electricity markets also may impact distributed energy resources, energy efficiency, and demand response, and can affect the amount that Maryland residents pay for electricity. In sum, PJM is a key gatekeeper regulating Maryland's efforts to significantly expand availability of clean energy.

Benefits of increased transparency by Maryland utilities in PJM

PJM policies and procedures are decided upon by its members, which include utility companies and electricity generators. PJM procedures include several levels of member voting, and votes often are not disclosed. Consequently, it is difficult to know how Maryland utilities are exercising their discretion. Although PJM policies and procedures are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Maryland retains regulatory authority over its utilities and thus the manner in which they participate in PJM.

The bill simply requires that Maryland utilities disclose their recorded votes at PJM meetings by filing reports with the PSC. The reports will need to include brief explanations of how the utilities' PJM votes served to advance the public interest. This will enable Maryland's public officials, regulators, and residents to know more about how Maryland utilities are carrying out their responsibilities, while retaining utilities' discretion to decide how to cast their PJM votes.

This bill will provide important transparency for Marylanders. The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 0121.

Mariah Shriner
Climate Campaign Representative
Mariah.Shriner@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org