



House Bill 1036

Public Utilities – Generating Stations – Generation and Siting

Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: Feb. 26, 2025

From: Chip Bertino, Worcester County Commissioner

I am Worcester County Commissioner Chip Bertino and I am writing to oppose House Bill 1036, a bill that eliminates the role of local government in key land use decisions and fails to consider the serious public safety risks of battery storage.

Local governments are best suited to determine land use policies in their communities. This bill is a one-size fits all mandate that benefits energy companies at the expense of taxpayers. It removes the little local control counties had and undermines the state's assertions that we're working to address Maryland's housing shortage. In fact, a project in my county that's currently under review by the Public Service Commission is just outside municipal limits, in a town and county growth area that's zoned residential AND in the water and sewer planning area. How is 35 acres of solar panels there smart growth?

Clean energy should be a smart fit, not a forced one that hurts our ability to meet housing needs and protect our communities' livability.

As local elected officials, we want to partner with the state to find a way to meet clean energy goals without harming our jurisdictions. This bill is not the way to do it. I urge you to provide House Bill 1036 with an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.