



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### Testimony in Support of HB0651

#### Maryland House Economic Matters Committee

#### Hearing Date:

#### Position: Favorable

I am writing to express my strong support for **HB0651**, which increases the number of Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) members from five to seven and ensures geographic representation from across the state. This legislation is a critical step toward improving the Commission's ability to make decisions that reflect the diverse needs of Maryland's communities.

#### Why Geographic Representation Matters

The PSC oversees critical energy and utility decisions that affect businesses, households, and local economies. However, energy needs and infrastructure concerns vary widely across the state. What works for urban centers like Baltimore City or Montgomery County may not be the best approach for rural communities on the Eastern Shore or in Western Maryland. By requiring at least one commissioner from each of the **five distinct regions**, HB0651 ensures that the Commission benefits from local perspectives when making regulatory decisions.

#### Improving Decision-Making with Local Expertise

Each region of Maryland faces unique challenges and opportunities regarding energy infrastructure, grid reliability, land use, and economic development. By adding commissioners from different geographic areas, the PSC will:

- **Better Address Local Energy Needs** – Different regions have varying levels of access to transmission infrastructure, renewable energy resources, and energy affordability challenges. For example, rural communities may have different reliability concerns than urban areas, and coastal regions may face more resilience issues related to extreme weather. Having commissioners from these regions ensures that these concerns are considered in policy decisions.
- **Ensure Fairness in Siting and Development** – Decisions about infrastructure projects, including power plants and transmission lines, often disproportionately impact specific communities. With more geographic diversity on the PSC, there will be a stronger balance of perspectives, leading to fairer and more responsible energy siting decisions.



- **Encourage Economic Growth and Innovation** – Expanding the Commission and including members from diverse economic regions fosters policies that promote investment in new energy technologies, job creation, and sustainable growth in **all** areas of Maryland—not just those historically prioritized.

### **Strengthening Public Trust in the PSC**

By ensuring that every region has a voice at the table, HB0651 enhances public confidence in the Commission’s regulatory process. When communities see that their unique challenges are acknowledged and addressed, they are more likely to support and comply with PSC decisions.

### **Conclusion**

HB0651 is a commonsense reform that will improve the **effectiveness, fairness, and credibility** of the Public Service Commission. By increasing the number of commissioners and ensuring regional representation, Maryland will benefit from more **balanced, well-informed, and locally responsive** decision-making. I urge the committee to give HB0651 a favorable report and help ensure that all Marylanders—regardless of where they live—have a voice in shaping our state’s energy future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

### **Respectfully submitted,**

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