

Written Testimony in support of SB0908
Maryland General Assembly

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Thank you, Chairman Wilson and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify in support of Maryland's Affordable Grid Act (**SB0908**) We request a favorable report from the Committee on **SB0908**

My name is Giulianna Di Lauro. I'm the Associate Director of Community Engagement to the Institute for Market Transformation. IMT is a national, non-partisan, nonprofit organization. We partner with government, business, and community to improve the efficiency and performance of buildings for the people inside them and the communities around them. IMT advises all 14 states and localities in the United States that have adopted building performance standards as well as 34 others that have committed to do so. This includes advising the Maryland Department of Environment and Montgomery County on their building energy performance standards.

The Affordable Grid Act represents an important step toward modernizing Maryland's electric grid infrastructure while ensuring cost-effective planning that benefits ratepayers. While grid planning may not be IMT's primary focus, we recognize its critical importance to building decarbonization and electrification - key priorities for Maryland under the Climate Solutions Now Act.

Distribution system planning directly impacts building owners' ability to electrify their buildings and add distributed energy resources like solar and storage. The requirements in HB1225 for utilities to coordinate with gas companies on decarbonization planning and identify locations for electrification will help building owners make informed decisions about equipment upgrades and electrification investments.

Based on our experience working with other states on building decarbonization policies, we have observed that improved distribution system planning transparency can provide valuable data to inform building electrification efforts. However, we also note that the effectiveness of such planning requirements varies across jurisdictions. While increased transparency is valuable, strong oversight and enforcement mechanisms are essential to ensure utilities follow through on identified non-wires alternatives and grid modernization opportunities.

The bill's requirements for utilities to forecast distributed energy resources and identify constraints on DER expansion will help building owners and operators understand where and when they can most cost-effectively electrify their buildings and add clean energy technologies.

The stakeholder engagement provisions will also ensure building owners' perspectives are considered in grid planning decisions that affect their properties.

We appreciate that the bill requires utilities to coordinate planning between gas and electric systems, which is critical for managing the transition of buildings away from fossil fuels. This coordination will help prevent both overbuilding and underbuilding of infrastructure as buildings electrify.

We support the overall goals and approach of **SB0908** and encourage the Committee to ensure the final bill maintains strong requirements for:

1. Meaningful stakeholder engagement that gives building owners and operators a voice in planning decisions that affect their properties
2. Coordination between gas and electric utilities on electrification planning
3. Clear metrics and oversight to ensure utilities follow through on identified non-wires alternatives
4. Transparency in hosting capacity analysis to help building owners understand grid constraints

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important legislation. We look forward to continuing to work with Maryland policymakers and stakeholders to advance building decarbonization and grid modernization in a way that benefits all Marylanders.