



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

SB0908 – Electric Distribution System Plans - Establishment (Affordable Grid Act)

Hearing Date: March 6, 2025

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hester

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

HoCo Climate Action is a 350.org local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

We urge you to vote favorably on the **Affordable Grid Act**, [SB0908](#), which provides a path forward to addressing grid inadequacies in the state and alleviating the burden on Maryland ratepayers for inadequate planning of our out of date grid. The solutions in the bill can be implemented more quickly and cost effectively than ill-conceived proposals like new gas-fired power plants and untested small modular nuclear reactors which would inevitably take longer to come online and jeopardize the state meeting its climate requirements. There are cost-effective advanced technologies available today that can help us get more out of our existing distribution grid while seamlessly integrating renewable sources back into the grid (e.g., small residential solar, batteries, and EVs).

Electricity costs are increasing rapidly in large part because of problems with PJM, our grid operator. Proposed clean renewable energy projects have been stuck in [PJM's interconnection queue](#) for years and the queue has been so long that they [stopped accepting projects](#) at one point. By the time projects clear the queue and are approved, they are no longer financially viable and many are not built. Now, increasing electricity demand due to high-intensity energy use facilities like data centers plays a major role in our rising rates. We need to get more out of our existing distribution grid while saving ratepayer dollars.

SB908 represents a comprehensive approach to modernizing Maryland's electric grid using best practices for distribution system planning and modern approaches and technologies that are cost-effective and currently employed by other states or utilities. This bill will require electric companies to submit distribution system plans to the Public Service Commission every three years utilizing bottom-up forecasting of projected load requirements and that incorporates increases in vehicle and building electrification and the goals of state and local decarbonization policies. It will also ensure electric companies develop investment plans to modernize and upgrade their assets to meet their forecasted needs and maximize energy efficiency upgrades.

Maryland is facing considerable energy challenges and must have a grid for the future. The deployment of advanced technologies and modern grid management practices are critical and the distribution system planning required in **SB0908** will create the road map for the future without having to resort to out of date solutions like a new climate killing gas-fired power plant.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support **SB0908** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

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