



SB0037 – SUPPORT

Jeff Mauk

Ceres

jmauk@ceres.org

SB0037: Utility Transparency and Accountability Act

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 13th, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I write today on behalf of Ceres to urge a favorable report from the Committee on SB0037 concerning Utility Transparency and Accountability. Ceres works with investors, companies, and financial leaders to promote sustainability solutions. Through our Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy Network (BICEP), we mobilize over 85 major employers, including several businesses doing business in Maryland, to advocate for more effective climate and clean energy policies.

Electricity costs are rising and projected to continue to grow due to decisions made by PJM. These decisions include parameters concerning its capacity auctions, as well as its delayed queue in allowing new energy resources on the grid. SB0037 strengthens Maryland's utility oversight by requiring electric companies to report their votes at meetings of PJM Interconnect, promoting accountability and protecting ratepayer interests.

Electric utilities' decisions at PJM meetings directly impact Maryland's energy costs, grid reliability, and market access. Currently, these votes occur without transparency, limiting oversight of decisions that affect ratepayer costs and business competitiveness.

The annual reporting requirement in SB0037 would:

- Enable better analysis of transmission cost drivers
- Support informed regulatory decisions
- Help identify opportunities to reduce energy costs
- Improve market competition through transparency
- Protect ratepayer interests in regional planning

This transparency measure aligns with standard corporate governance practices and imposes minimal administrative burden, as utilities already track their PJM voting records internally.

Several other states are considering similar requirements, demonstrating the feasibility and increasing need for utility voting transparency. Maryland businesses and ratepayers deserve and can benefit from insight into decisions that impact their energy costs and reliability.

This targeted transparency measure represents sound policy that protects Maryland ratepayers while maintaining reliable and cost-effective utility operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Mauk
Director, State Policy, Eastern Region, Ceres