



TESTIMONY OF AARON BAST
BUSINESS MANAGER & FINANCIAL SECRETARY-TREASURER, IRON WORKERS
LOCAL 5

SUBMITTED TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE & SENATE
EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

REGARDING SB937 / HB1035 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Chairs Feldman and Wilson, and esteemed members of the committees, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Iron Workers Local 5. Our union represents the hardworking men and women who build and maintain the infrastructure critical to Maryland's economic and energy future. Our workforce, composed of thousands of skilled professionals, contributes daily to the state's energy, industrial, and commercial development.

As Maryland charts its course for long-term energy planning, it is crucial that legislative efforts support economic growth, workforce development, and energy security without unnecessary constraints. This bill, while a step forward, requires key adjustments to ensure Maryland remains competitive and adaptable in an evolving energy landscape.

A significant concern in this legislation is the proposed restriction on behind-the-meter (BTM) configurations for data centers. This provision is not only premature but also potentially damaging to Maryland's economic competitiveness. The conversation around BTM configurations is far from settled at the federal level, with ongoing discussions at FERC shaping the regulatory outlook. Unfortunately, testimony from Maryland Senator Katie Fry Hester at the FERC Colocation Technical Conference mischaracterized the state's position, creating a misleading narrative that does not reflect the broad spectrum of views within the Maryland General Assembly or the energy sector. Our partners, including IBEW Local 26, the Mid Atlantic Pipe Trades Association (UA), the Ironworkers District Council of the Mid-Atlantic States, and represented by attorney Roger Manno, are actively involved in FERC proceedings to ensure that these issues are addressed with the depth and expertise they require. It is imperative that Maryland refrains from implementing state-level restrictions before these matters are resolved at the federal level.

The role of nuclear energy in Maryland's energy future is another critical consideration. While SB937 / HB1035 takes an important step in recognizing the value of nuclear power, its procurement structure lacks the necessary financial stability to attract essential private investment. Iron Workers Local 5 fully supports an amendment put forth by Constellation that introduces a state-level safety net in the event of federal Production Tax Credit (PTC) reductions



or eliminations. Ensuring the economic viability of Maryland's existing nuclear facilities, such as Calvert Cliffs, is essential for a reliable, carbon-free energy future. The state must collaborate closely with industry stakeholders to develop a procurement structure that fosters sustainable investment and ensures long-term success in nuclear energy.

Additionally, this bill's study language regarding utility-owned generation is overly restrictive. A narrowly focused study on a single procurement model does not serve Maryland's best interests. Instead, a broader, more comprehensive analysis of energy procurement options—like the approach taken in the Hester/Crosby bill—should be pursued. Maryland needs a fact-based assessment of multiple procurement strategies to determine the most effective, cost-efficient path forward.

Maryland stands at a pivotal moment in shaping its energy strategy. SB937 / HB1035 lays the foundation for progress, but it must be refined to avoid unintended consequences that could hinder economic growth and job creation. Removing the premature restrictions on data centers, strengthening nuclear procurement with Constellation's amendment, and expanding the scope of the utility ownership study are necessary steps to ensure a balanced and future-ready energy policy.

I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to continued discussions on these vital issues.

Aaron Bast
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