

FAVORABLE – Senate Bill 908
SB 908– Public Utilities – Electric Distribution System Plans –
Establishment (Affordable Grid Act)
Education, Energy, and
Environment
Thursday March 6, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paul Verchinski. I hope that you take the time to read this. I participated in the Distribution System Planning Work Group (DSP) established by the Public Service Commission (PSC) for 3 years and ultimately resigned (See attachment). I was interested in participating as a volunteer since I was formerly the Director of Planning for the Federal Transit Administration and had developed transportation planning courses at the National Transit Institute at Rutgers University. These planning courses were presented to transit operators and Metropolitan Planning organizations in the United States. I know what plans need to incorporate to be effective.

The first year of the DSP was a disaster. A consultant was hired under a utility contract and the ultimate report ratified the Business As Usual approach of the utilities. Stakeholder input was marginalized in the report. We started a do over in light of the requirements of the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA) . Our charge was to develop with utility participation a DSP for each of the 5 Maryland utilities and to adopt a Rule in 2025. The participation by the utilities was limited to their constant answer of unless we are required to do X by legislation, we have no intention of offering up ideas to fulfill the CSNA. It is therefore incumbent on the legislature to provide explicit requirements for Utility DSPs through the Affordable Grid Act.

Unfortunately, Phase 2 of the DSP has not gone well and this legislation would address the shortcomings of the DSP. Current utility DSP is siloed and is not Comprehensive, Continuing, and Coordinated. As you know, 3 utilities are owned by Exelon, an Investor Owned Utility (IOU). Over the 3 years, I repeatedly asked the IOU utility representatives about metrics to gauge their progress toward the goals of the CSNA. No metrics were ever offered up nor are there any in current utility DSPs . I commented on this to the PSC and other issues after the Utilities filed their Utility Plans dated November 15, 2024. (See attachment). The Affordable Grid Act would substantially address the shortcomings of utility DSPs.

I ask that the committee report out the bill Favorably.

Paul Verchinski

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Attachments (2)