

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Testimony on: SB716 – Public Utilities – Nuclear Energy - Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and Procurement (Decarbonization Infrastructure Solutions Act)
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Unfavorable
Hearing Date: March 6, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in opposition to SB716. While I have resided in Maryland since 1986, I am writing because my children and young grandchildren live in Maryland and I am concerned for their future.

SB716 would include nuclear energy reactors, including small modular reactors (SMRs) as Tier 1 renewable sources under the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). It would increase the RPS targets to take into account increasing contributions from nuclear energy as well as from solar energy, offshore wind and geothermal. SB716 provides for creation of certified NRECs and requires qualifying nuclear reactors to be connected to the electric distribution system serving Maryland, thereby increasing generation of clean energy resources in Maryland.

I am not opposed to new nuclear power generation, particularly SMRs. I am, however, opposed to ratepayer incentives to promote this technology. In October, 2024 the U.S. Department of Energy opened applications for up to \$900 million to support deployment of Generation III+ SMRs. New forms of nuclear reactors using sodium, not water for cooling, [are already being constructed](#) on a small scale. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has underscored the expense of new nuclear technologies, indicating that the rollout of new nuclear projects to reduce carbon emissions [cannot rely exclusively on public finances](#). Tremendous private investment will be needed and big tech companies [are providing](#) the funds.

The RPS provides ratepayer subsidies for Tier 1 energy resources. Given the increase in utility prices for Maryland ratepayers, and the enormous amount of financial resources needed to support the necessary research, development and commercialization of advanced nuclear technologies, including SMRs, ratepayer subsidies would not provide a meaningful contribution and would serve only to increase utility costs.

For these reasons, I oppose SB716 and urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report in Committee.