

HB 1532 – Continuing the Next Generation Energy Act / Utility RELIEF Act

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 25, 2026

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FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Building Decarbonization Coalition in support of House Bill 1532, with amendment.

The Building Decarbonization Coalition is a national nonprofit that unites building industry stakeholders, policymakers, and communities to help buildings transition to clean energy. We work across the country to advance practical, market-driven solutions that lower energy costs, create jobs, and improve the health and comfort of the places where people live, work, and learn.

House Bill 1532 makes important updates to the authorized uses of the Strategic Energy Investment Fund. The bill reflects a continued effort by the General Assembly to ensure that SEIF resources are deployed in ways that provide tangible benefits to Maryland ratepayers while advancing the State's broader energy and climate goals.

We respectfully submit that the bill should be amended to ensure that SEIF is fully aligned with modern building energy systems and with Maryland's existing building performance requirements.

The amendment accomplishes three related objectives.

It clarifies that SEIF may be used to support district energy systems alongside building electrification and transportation electrification.

It modernizes the electrification language to ensure that connections to electrified district energy systems and electrified thermal assets are clearly eligible uses.

It ensures that SEIF may be used to support compliance with Maryland's Building Energy Performance Standards under § 2-1602 of the Environment Article.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1532 with the following amendment:

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1532

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 5, in line 16, strike “without” and substitute “with”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 68, after line 23, insert:

(A) IN THIS SECTION, “DISTRICT ENERGY” MEANS THERMAL ENERGY GENERATED AT ONE OR MORE CENTRAL FACILITIES THAT PRODUCE HOT WATER, STEAM, OR CHILLED WATER THAT THEN FLOWS THROUGH A NETWORK OF INSULATED UNDERGROUND PIPES TO PROVIDE HOT WATER, SPACE HEATING, AIR CONDITIONING, OR CHILLED WATER TO NEARBY BUILDINGS.

and in line 24, strike “(a)” and substitute “(A-1)”

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 69, strike beginning with “(14)” in line 16 down through “AND” in line 17 and substitute:

(14) TO PROVIDE LOANS AND GRANTS FOR:

(I) BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION, INCLUDING CONNECTION TO AN ELECTRIFIED DISTRICT ENERGY SYSTEM;

(II) ELECTRIFIED THERMAL ENERGY GENERATION ASSETS INTERCONNECTED WITH A DISTRICT ENERGY SYSTEM;

(III) TRANSPORTATION ELECTRIFICATION; AND

(15) TO PROVIDE LOANS AND GRANTS FOR PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, AND TECHNOLOGIES THAT ASSIST COVERED BUILDINGS, AS DEFINED IN § 2-1601 OF THE ENVIRONMENT ARTICLE, IN MEETING THE BUILDING ENERGY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED UNDER § 2-1602 OF THE ENVIRONMENT ARTICLE; AND

AMENDMENT NO. 4

On page 69, in line 18, strike “(15)” and substitute “(16)”.