

Testimony for SB0596 - Large Load Customers - Electric System Interconnection and Demand Response Program

Bill Sponsor: Senator Hestor

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Organization: Chesapeake Earth Holders Community

Submitting: Jeffrey V. Johnson, Co-Founder and Board Member

Position: Favorable

My name is Dr. Jeffrey V. Johnson and I live in Maryland Legislative District 10. I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0596 on behalf of the Chesapeake Earth Holders Community which is a member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing as well as the Interfaith Power and Light DMV coalition of faith based congregations.

We believe strongly in the need to protect our electrical grid and to do it in a way that respects the needs and interests of the people of Maryland. The magnitude and scope of data centers is growing rapidly in our state. Without wise intervention now the new electrical demands of these rapidly proliferating data centers will put ever increasing pressure on Maryland's electrical grid. This will have a direct impact on Maryland's citizens and businesses in two ways. First, electricity will become far more expensive which will have an adverse impact on those who are least able to afford the increased costs. Second, individual households and smaller businesses are very likely to be pushed into second place during times of peak or high demand for electricity thereby failing to get the electricity that they need.

Senate Bill 0596 will directly address this potential crises through constructing clear guidelines for how data centers, and other large users of electricity connect to the grid (particularly during times of peak demand). SB0596 will also create incentives for large load customers to provide their own sources of power that specifically address the potential for crises during periods of high use.

Another vitally important element in this bill which we strongly support is the necessity for the use of clean, non-emitting sources of energy during these high demand periods such as battery storage. We believe it would a major step backward for Maryland should we allow fossil fuel powered generators to be used as back up sources of energy during these periods of peak demand.

At the present time no Maryland agency is tracking how large load customers like data centers are consuming electricity on the grid. SB0596 will require the Public Service Commission to establish a process that large load customers would undertake in order to be able to connect to the grid. All large load customers seeking to connect would be required to provide capacity for 25% of load with either behind meter storage, capacity to purchase new battery storage or an additional new carbon-free asset.

We strongly support SB0596 and recommend a **Favorable** report in committee.

