

March 23, 2026

Maryland Senate Senate
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

RE: Favorable Testimony on House Bill 1532

Chair Feldman and members of the Committee:

My name is Jamie Shopland, and I am a long time resident and now candidate in Frederick County Council in District 2. I am writing to urge a favorable report on House Bill 1532.

District 2 is on the front lines of major energy infrastructure decisions. The proposed Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project transmission line is slated to pass through my district, and residents are already grappling with what that means for their communities, their property, and their utility bills. This bill comes at a critical moment.

Part of my professional career has been spent as a consumer protection advocate, and I view House Bill 1532 as a meaningful opportunity to better protect Maryland ratepayers. At a time when energy costs are rising and major infrastructure investments are being proposed, we must ensure that the system works for the people who ultimately pay the bills.

House Bill 1532 takes important steps in that direction. It strengthens protections for residential customers and improves the administration of energy assistance programs, ensuring that bill assistance, weatherization, and arrearage relief are better coordinated and more accessible to those who need them most.

The bill also increases transparency and accountability in utility rate-setting. Requiring clearer customer notice, plain-language reporting, and improved access to Public Service Commission proceedings helps ensure that residents are not left in the dark about decisions that directly affect their monthly expenses.

Just as importantly, the bill begins to address the growing impact of large-load customers, including data centers, on our energy system. By requiring appropriate rate structures and oversight, it helps guard against cost-shifting that would otherwise fall on residential customers.

For communities like mine, where new transmission infrastructure is being considered, these protections are essential. Residents deserve confidence that decisions about energy infrastructure and cost recovery are being made fairly, transparently, and with their interests in mind.

Finally, the bill's provisions to streamline solar permitting and interconnection are a practical step toward giving residents more control over their energy costs while supporting Maryland's clean energy goals.

House Bill 1532 is a thoughtful, balanced approach to affordability, transparency, and planning in our energy system. It recognizes that as we build for the future, we must also protect the people paying for it today.

I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jamie Shopland, Candidate
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By Authority: Friends of Jamie Shopland, Elizabeth Heaney, Treasurer