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TESTIMONY OF ROBERT COOPER, BUSINESS MANAGER  
UA SPRINKLER FITTERS LOCAL 669

ON BEHALF OF UA SPRINKLER FITTERS LOCAL 669

HOUSE BILL 940 / SENATE BILL 596 – FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
AND THE HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Dear Chair Feldman, Chair Korman, and Honorable Members of the Committees:

On behalf of UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 940 / Senate Bill 596, with amendments.

UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 is a national local representing approximately 16,000 highly trained sprinkler fitters nationwide, including members who live and work throughout Maryland and the broader Mid-Atlantic region. Our members install and maintain fire protection and life-safety systems in large commercial and industrial facilities, including hyperscale data centers and other large-load campuses where reliability, redundancy, and safety are mission-critical. These projects are an essential source of sustained, prevailing-wage work for our members and require predictable construction sequencing and regulatory certainty.

We support responsible electric system planning and policies that protect grid reliability. However, as drafted, House Bill 940 risks chilling large-load industrial development in Maryland, particularly data centers that are actively comparing Maryland to competing jurisdictions. Mandatory, front-loaded requirements tied to interconnection, undefined clean-energy procurement obligations, and duplicative demand-response structures introduce uncertainty at the earliest stages of project planning—uncertainty that can delay, downsize, or deter projects before construction begins.

When large-scale construction projects do not move forward, union construction jobs do not materialize—and the career pathways created through Maryland's high-caliber, state-registered apprenticeship programs, particularly for locally hired workers, fail to materialize as well.

**Road Sprinkler Fitters Local Union No. 669**

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From the perspective of the fire protection and life-safety trades, early-stage delays have disproportionate impacts. Sprinkler systems are installed later in the construction sequence, after significant capital has already been committed. When projects stall or fail to advance past interconnection or financing hurdles, specialized trades like ours lose work opportunities despite strong demand and workforce readiness.

Local 669 is also concerned that the bill establishes Maryland-specific requirements that may duplicate or conflict with existing PJM and utility reliability programs already used by large-load customers. Grid reliability goals can be achieved through alignment with established regional frameworks without imposing prescriptive mandates that undermine project feasibility.

Accordingly, UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 urges the General Assembly to amend House Bill 940 / Senate Bill 596 to:

Remove mandatory capacity procurement and demand-response participation as preconditions to interconnection;

Clearly define eligible compliance resources and allow flexibility through PJM-qualified mechanisms;

Avoid duplicative regulatory structures that create uncertainty in project timelines; and

Preserve Maryland's competitiveness for large-scale industrial projects that support prevailing-wage construction and life-safety work.

With these amendments, the bill can advance grid reliability while continuing to attract the large-load projects that sustain union jobs, support apprenticeship training, and ensure safe, resilient facilities for Maryland communities.

For these reasons, UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments.

Sincerely,

Robert Cooper

Business Manager

UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669