



# Maryland Energy Administration

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**FROM:** MEA  
**SUBJECT:** HB 1532 - Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act  
**DATE:** March 25, 2026

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## **MEA Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) respectfully submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1532 with amendments.

House Bill 1532 represents a comprehensive effort to lower energy costs by modernizing Maryland's energy framework in response to increasing load growth, evolving market structures, and the State's long-term climate and reliability commitments. The bill also addresses large load rate design, multiyear rate plan guardrails, EmPOWER program cycles, nuclear procurement structure, and long-term planning for energy siting and permitting, amongst other energy related initiatives. MEA endorses delaying an increase in the EmPOWER goal to reduce future surcharges to ratepayers. To further reduce costs in the short term, MEA also endorses the decision to utilize the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) to reduce the surcharge associated with EmPOWER. This is a realistic and sustainable path to meeting climate and energy goals that also addresses short term energy cost burden to ratepayers. This is already an allowable use of SEIF under the existing statute.

While MEA supports the provisions discussed above and the overall intent of the legislation, we respectfully request consideration of the following additional amendments:

**1. Retain flexibility within the RGGI Renewable Energy subaccount:** The Renewable Energy subaccount within RGGI (RGGI-RE) is one of the most flexible funding sources for MEA. Currently, RGGI-RE funds operations and programs necessary to continue MEA's mission to reach the State's climate and energy goals. It funds costs associated with the State's efforts before PJM and FERC, grantmaking/tracking software, studies conducted by MEA, including legislatively mandated reports (such as the data center study required under SB 116, 2025), any non-LMIOU (low- to moderate-income, overburdened and underserved) census tract renewable energy projects, including community solar, the Clean Buildings Hub, outreach and education, as well as energy storage. Therefore, MEA seeks to retain this flexibility in order to continue operating in its normal course and requests to remove the percentage mandates of SG 9-20B-05(g)(3)(ii) in favor of making these uses permissible uses.

**2. Alter the reverse auction program to clarify that MEA is the lead agency regarding reporting and make other technical changes to ensure a successful reverse auction:** MEA simply seeks to clarify that MEA, in consultation with the Public Service Commission, shall prepare the report required under SG 9-20E-02(g). Additionally, in order to ensure full utilization of available funds in the reverse auction, MEA recommends that community solar be included. MEA would also seek to remove the need to create capacity goals or, at a minimum, to allow for an estimated range. As a market driven mechanism, the capacity of renewable resources will depend upon multiple factors, such as funding availability, supply chain conditions, and specific project details that influence bids into the reverse auction in any given year. Lastly, MEA requests that language indicating that “contracts” will be made with bidders instead be classified as “grants”, and that the requirement to adopt *new* regulations be removed. MEA is largely a grantmaking agency (as opposed to a contractor), and MEA already has regulations in place for SEIF-funded programs. Adding a requirement to adopt potentially duplicative regulations may delay the implementation of the reverse auction.

**3. Align the definition of “large load customer” with the PJM definition:** The bill lowers the threshold for a large load customer from 100 MW to 25 MW at a single location. MEA advises against reducing the threshold to 25 MW, which may unintentionally capture non-data center commercial and industrial customers. Maintaining a higher threshold preserves clarity of intent in the Next Generation Energy Act that the State is excluding more traditional businesses from the special rate class. To align the threshold with the definition PJM uses, MEA suggests utilizing a 50 MW threshold.

With the amendments outlined above, as well as the amendments being proposed by our sister agencies, MEA believes the legislation can help to stabilize costs and advance reliability while preserving flexibility in program design and maintaining strong interagency coordination.

MEA respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments and looks forward to continued collaboration with the Speaker, Senate President, the relevant Committees, PSC, DNR, MDE, and other stakeholders as this important legislation moves forward.

MEA urges the committee to adopt the proposed amendments and to issue a **favorable report as amended**.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison, at [landon.fahrig@maryland.gov](mailto:landon.fahrig@maryland.gov) or 410.913.1537.