



**The Maryland Department of the Environment  
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***Senate Bill 834***

***Environment - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs, Services, and Plans -  
Moratorium***

**Position:** Oppose  
**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Date:** March 5, 2026  
**From:** Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **OPPOSES** SB 834.

**Bill Summary**

SB 834 would prohibit a unit of State government from implementing or enforcing, after July 1, 2026, certain provisions of law relating to energy efficiency and conservation programs, services, and plans that support certain greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and targets. SB 834 would also eliminate EmPOWER Maryland and other state energy efficiency programs, removing access to rebates and incentives for residents, small businesses and local governments that reduce energy costs and support climate goals.

**Position Rationale**

SB 834 would eliminate Maryland's authority to manage EmPOWER and other cost-saving energy efficiency programs. By ending these initiatives, the bill would halt programs that lower energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, specifically for low-to-moderate-income residents. Repealing EmPOWER would lead to higher monthly utility bills for consumers. Currently, the program saves residents money by lowering energy demand and reducing overall costs. Despite ending the services, SB 834 would allow utility companies to continue charging customers a surcharge for expenses incurred through July 1, 2026. Consequently, Maryland citizens would be forced to pay utilities a fee without receiving any of the program's rebates or energy-saving benefits.

Accordingly, MDE asks for an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **SB 834**.