



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Bill Title: [HB1532](#) Utility Relief Act

Position: FWA (Favorable with Amendments)

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst on behalf of Progressive Maryland

Date: March 23, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Iman Habib, Climate Policy Analyst for Progressive Maryland, a member-led, power-building organization that advocates for working class people tackling a wide range of issues, including energy justice. We have over 125,000 members spanning across Maryland with significant bases in Baltimore City, Prince George's, Montgomery, Frederick, and Harford counties, as well as the Eastern Shore. **Progressive Maryland supports HB1532 Utility Relief Act with some crucial considerations related to consumer protections.**

We thank the bill sponsors for their time in developing this bill and especially support the provision prohibiting the use of ratepayers dollars to cover executive compensation above a certain threshold. We are also in favor of the provision directing the PSC to assess the possibility of moving to a state-wide third-party administrator that is responsible for implementing the EmPOWER program and streamlining this process. The transition to a third-party administrator will ensure that the state is incentivized to promote energy efficiency unlike the status quo. However, we strongly urge the committee to ensure that EmPOWER is protected, especially in the next three years.

Currently, the bill reduces the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions target for utility companies from 2.5% annually to 1.75% annually, which disincentives them to invest in clean energy (i.e. continue contributing to the EmPOWER program). Reducing these emissions targets enables utilities to continue charging excessive rates and using fossil fuel sources to provide electricity. Progressive Maryland members are constantly speaking about the cost of living crisis exacerbated by skyrocketing utility rates. This crisis is not a product of an energy efficiency program like EmPOWER, but the exorbitantly high electricity rates charged by utility companies. Therefore, cutting EmPOWER during an unprecedented cost of living crisis removes a cost saving measure, and is *not* an action the state should take at this time. Given these concerns, **Progressive Maryland urges a favorable report with requested changes to House Bill 1532.**