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Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) was created as a not-for-profit corporate instrumentality of state in 2008 through an act of the Maryland General Assembly.

MCEC focuses on an economic development mission to advance the adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency products, services, and technologies with associated jobs, wages, and tax revenue for Maryland. MCEC leverages private capital and private sector capabilities; facilitates the commercialization of innovative advanced energy technologies; implements climate justice initiatives, strives to reduce energy costs for consumers, and drives reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the use of fossil fuels.

HB1525 - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, EmPOWER Energy Efficiency Programs, and Community Solar Energy Generating Systems

Hearing Date: March 10, 2026
Committee: House Environment & Transportation Committee
Recommendation: UNFAV

MCEC opposes the intent and purpose of this legislation that requires the Governor to withdraw Maryland from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and eliminates the EmPOWER program. Maryland's participation in RGGI has generated more than \$1.6B with an additional \$33.5M in set-aside allowance sales during seventy (70) auctions since 2009. The RGGI spending formula mandates that 50% of the proceeds go to Energy Assistance, 10% to low-to-moderate income energy efficiency and community programs, 10% to all energy efficiency and community programs, 20% to renewable and clean energy projects, and 10% to administration of the program.

The EmPOWER program allows the opportunity for homeowners to make energy efficiency upgrades. Without this program, homeowners may choose not to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

Since 2017, the State has provided an annual grant of \$1.2M operating capital to MCEC through the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) using RGGI auction proceeds. The RGGI also provides MCEC, the Maryland Energy Innovation Accelerator (MEIA), and the Maryland Energy Innovation Institute (MEI²) with annual funding for operations and programs. Without funding from RGGI, the funding could be significantly reduced or eliminated. Without the appropriation of RGGI funds, MCEC will not be able to operate and deliver on its statute directed mission.

MCEC has proven to be an effective vehicle in efforts to achieve climate and clean energy goals for the State of Maryland. Over the past 17 years state and federal funding invested in and through MCEC have resulted in:

- **Over \$230M in leveraged private capital investment, a 10 to 1 ROI**
- **Over \$93M in project contracts awarded**
- **More than 129M kWh of energy demand reduction**
- **\$10.15M in guaranteed cost savings for consumers**
- **17,279 metric tons of CO₂ avoided**

A [comprehensive study](#) performed by the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University, measuring economic impact, tax revenue, and jobs associated with the activity and investments of MCEC, finds those investments have resulted in:

- **\$621 M in overall statewide output**
- **3000 jobs supported**

- \$82M in tax revenue, and
- ROI of 2.87 to one dollar spent with the center

Half of the funds collected through RGGI are dedicated by statute to fund rate payer assistance for low-income households in Maryland. Loss of the auction proceeds would directly impact those households in a significant way, impacting affordability.

The EmPOWER program assists homeowners in making energy efficiency upgrades on their homes. Without this program, this opportunity would not exist.

MCEC urges an unfavorable report and thanks Chair Korman and members of the committee for their hard work and consideration.