

March 6, 2026

**In Support of HB 1561, the Affordable Energy Act**

**Submitted by:** Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

**To:** Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee:

My name is Marco Ávila, P.E., and I am here today on behalf of the MD Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber represents and supports Hispanic-owned small businesses across Maryland, many of which operate on narrow margins and rely heavily on predictable operating costs. Rising energy prices reduce profitability, limit opportunities for expansion, and constrains job creation in communities throughout the state. Reliable and affordable electricity strengthens entrepreneurship, promotes economic inclusion, and supports sustainable growth for Maryland's diverse business community.

I'm here to urge your support for HB 1561, the Affordable Energy Act. Maryland is facing an energy crisis due to power supply not keeping pace with rapidly increasing demand. When available supply lags, customers experience higher bills and greater reliability risks, which are outcomes that affect families and businesses across the state. These rising costs stem overwhelmingly from power supply prices set in regional wholesale markets, which Maryland does not control.

HB 1561, the Affordable Energy Act, offers a solution that encourages increased energy generation to Maryland's system without disruption to the current market. Currently, utilities are required to maintain reliability, yet they are prohibited from building the generation needed to meet growing demand. With no entity responsible for closing the supply gap, Maryland is left exposed to market volatility and reliability concerns.

The bill addresses this by authorizing the Public Service Commission to direct regulated utilities to develop renewable generation and battery storage resources when necessary to protect affordability and grid stability. This approach places development under strong public oversight – allowing regulators to evaluate costs, approve what gets built, and ensure that new resources align with Maryland's policy objectives.

The Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce believes that reliability of the energy system matters, because economic stability matters. Greater predictability in energy costs strengthens competitiveness and provides a stronger environment for investment and growth.



HB 1561 equips Maryland with a dependable strategy to control rising costs, reinforce reliability, and secure the state's economic future.

For these reasons, the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce respectfully ask for a favorable vote for HB 1561.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marco V. Avila, P.E." with a horizontal line underneath.

***President/CEO***  
***Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce***