



HB897: Electricity Transmission and Distribution, Energy Storage, and Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Lower Bills and Local Power Act of 2026)

Position: Favorable

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members of the Committee

Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on HB897, which would help lower costs for ratepayers through four major changes to state law.

As the members of this committee are painfully aware, energy rates have risen dramatically in recent years due to a variety of factors. Thousands of Marylanders each year face shutoff notices due to nonpayment, while many others are forced to juggle multi-hundred-dollar utility bills alongside the ever-increasing costs of rent, groceries, and other necessities. In fact, when Economic Action Maryland Fund surveyed our members and other stakeholders this winter, 63% stated utility bills were their primary concern.

There are several ways this legislation will reduce rates for ratepayers:

- Encourages the use of Advanced Transmission Technologies to promote more cost-effective transmission projects;
- Advances lower-cost solar and energy storage projects, which can reduce supply costs for consumers;
- Encourages siting transmission lines along existing right of ways, which would also promote cost-savings;
- Mandates companies to join the PJM, which will save ratepayers from the cost of the current bonuses the companies receive for 'voluntarily' joining.

We support removing the performance-based incentives language on page 4, lines 22-27. This would open the door to new profit recovery at the expense of ratepayers, and we appreciate the Governor's willingness to remove this provision.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB897.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

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