



# Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

## Testimony in Support of HB 1040 Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Mandated Uses - Climate Change Programs

TO: Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee  
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate for the Climate  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.  
DATE: March 3, 2026

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **HB 1040-Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Mandated Uses - Climate Change Programs**. We are a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist (UU) Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs. The **Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund - Mandated Uses - Climate Change Programs** aligns with both of the values.

Maryland's Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) is our single largest non-taxpayer-generated source of revenue, specifically targeted toward advancing climate pollution reduction and supporting low-income, overburdened, and underserved Marylanders. Its critical programs include: energy efficiency grants, decarbonizing schools, clean energy rebates, community solar, electric vehicle rebates and infrastructure, electric school buses, energy assistance, among others. The SEIF helps power Maryland's future and must be used as intended.

For two decades, the SEIF has helped families and businesses cut energy costs while accelerating clean energy and energy efficiency. SEIF funds ultimately come from ratepayers and are intended by law to expand renewable energy, improve efficiency, and assist low-income households with energy bills. Reducing or redirecting SEIF funds undermines Maryland's climate progress and amounts to a regressive shift of ratepayer dollars away from their intended purpose.

It is well known that carefully managed strategic investments have the potential to unlock new technologies that may have far reaching impact. Classic examples include investments in silicon computing, space programs, photovoltaic cells, among many others. Transferring funds for nearterm gains is bad economic policy.

Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) programs are already demonstrating strong demand and impact. Grant programs supporting local governments, public schools, commercial solar, and energy equity are consistently oversubscribed. Communities across Maryland are eager to modernize buildings, electrify equipment, and install solar—but they need the funding to do so. Maintaining MEA's full FY2026 funding level of \$365 million is essential.

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Maryland should be moving to decarbonization as quickly as possible and maintaining the integrity of the Strategic Energy Investment Fund is critical. Therefore we urge a FAVORABLE report on **HB 1040**.

*Phil Webster, PhD*

Lead Advocate for the Climate, UULM-MD

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