

City of Laurel, Maryland
Office of the Mayor

Bill Number: HB 1561

Bill Title: The Affordable Energy Act

Position: SUPPORT

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Keith R. Sydnor, and I am the Mayor of the City of Laurel, Maryland. I write in strong support of House Bill 1561, The Affordable Energy Act, because energy affordability and grid reliability are essential to public safety, household stability, and sustainable economic growth for communities like Laurel.

Laurel is a growing and diverse municipality situated along a major regional corridor. Our residents include working families, seniors on fixed incomes, and small business owners who are particularly vulnerable to rising electricity costs. When wholesale energy prices increase, the impact is immediate and tangible, placing strain on household budgets, local employers, and municipal operations. The City must also operate critical public facilities without interruption, and escalating energy costs directly affect our ability to deliver essential services responsibly.

Grid reliability is a public safety concern. During periods of extreme weather and heightened regional demand, the City of Laurel has coordinated closely with emergency management partners and shared conservation guidance to help maintain system stability. These experiences underscore the importance of proactive, long-term energy planning rather than reactive responses during emergencies.

Laurel's economic vitality depends on dependable and predictable access to electricity. Local businesses, retail establishments, public safety facilities, and employers tied to the region's technology and institutional infrastructure require a stable power supply to operate efficiently. Energy market volatility increases operating costs and creates uncertainty that can discourage long-term investment in our community.

The City of Laurel is also advancing sustainability initiatives to support responsible growth and environmental stewardship. Achieving these goals requires a reliable electric grid and a clear, coordinated pathway for renewable generation and energy storage development, one that balances innovation with affordability and protects ratepayers.

House Bill 1561 strengthens Maryland's ability to plan for adequate energy supply under the oversight of the Public Service Commission. By establishing a structured mechanism

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to address reliability and affordability risks when market conditions fail to deliver sufficient resources, this legislation promotes cost predictability, resilience, and thoughtful long-term planning.

For communities like Laurel, HB 1561 represents a balanced and forward-looking approach to meeting Maryland's energy needs. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1561.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith R. Sydnor
Mayor, City of Laurel, Maryland