



RE: House Bill 1561

March 5, 2026,

Good afternoon Mr. Chair Korman,

My name is Rich Skayhan, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Metro Baltimore Hispanic Contractors Association as proud board member.

Our association works with Hispanic-owned construction and trade businesses across the Baltimore region. In addition to our core membership, we maintain an active network of more than 5,300 contractors, small business owners, workforce professionals, and industry stakeholders who receive our regular communications, updates, and program information.

Through this broader business and workforce network, we stay closely connected to the challenges facing small and emerging contractors throughout Maryland. These businesses build homes, schools, roads, and infrastructure across our state, and the economic conditions they face directly affect their ability to hire, grow, and remain competitive.

Many of the contractors we engage with are small and family-owned businesses that are working hard to create jobs, expand opportunities, and contribute to economic mobility within Maryland's diverse business community.

For our members and the broader network we engage with, reliable and affordable electricity is not just a policy issue — it directly affects whether their businesses can grow and create jobs.

When energy prices rise sharply, it impacts everything. It increases the cost to run fabrication shops, raises operating costs for offices and equipment, and makes it harder for small contractors to stay competitive.

Many of our members are already feeling the pressure of higher energy bills. For small and mid-size businesses, those increases matter.

That is why we support House Bill 1561, the Affordable Energy Act.

Maryland is facing a growing challenge with energy supply and rising demand. As our economy grows and electricity needs increase, we must make sure our state has enough reliable power available.

If supply does not keep up with demand, the result is simple — prices go up and reliability becomes uncertain.

Businesses need predictability. They need to know that the lights stay on and that energy costs will not suddenly spike.

HB 1561 is important because it gives Maryland additional tools to plan ahead and strengthen our energy supply.

The bill allows the Public Service Commission to work with utilities to develop new renewable generation and battery storage when it is necessary for reliability and affordability.

Just as important, it places these decisions under public oversight, helping ensure that investments are responsible and aligned with Maryland's long-term energy goals.

Other states already use similar approaches to help maintain reliable power systems while supporting economic growth.

From the perspective of our association, this bill is about stability and planning.

When businesses have predictable energy costs, they can invest in equipment, hire workers, expand operations, and continue contributing to Maryland's economy.

For the Hispanic contractors and workforce professionals we engage with, those opportunities are critical.

In closing, reliable and affordable energy is essential for Maryland's small business community.

HB 1561 provides a practical step toward strengthening our energy system while supporting economic growth.

For these reasons, the Metro Baltimore Hispanic Contractors Association respectfully supports HB 1561.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rich Skayhan  
Board Member  
MBHCA