



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation

DATE: February 10, 2026

POSITION: Unfavorable

BILL: HB 66

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) respectfully opposes House Bill 66, entitled the Restoring Energy Freedom Act, which would require the Governor to withdraw Maryland from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). MML believes that withdrawing from RGGI would have significant and adverse impacts on Maryland’s municipalities, public health, and climate resilience.

House Bill 66 proposes that Maryland exit the cooperative cap-and-invest program known as RGGI, which has been a cornerstone of the state’s efforts to reduce pollution from the power sector, improve air quality, and fund essential energy and environmental initiatives within local communities. RGGI has provided critical resources to Maryland’s municipalities, with auction proceeds supporting projects that enhance energy efficiency, promote renewable energy adoption, and build climate resilience. These funds are particularly important for low-income and overburdened communities, helping municipalities improve infrastructure and deliver tangible public benefits. The loss of this funding stream under HB66 would severely limit the ability of local governments to pursue and implement such vital projects.

The cap-and-invest structure of RGGI has successfully driven down emissions from the power sector, directly benefiting public health throughout the state. Exiting RGGI would risk reversing this progress and could increase air pollution exposure, especially in vulnerable populations. The uncertainty introduced by HB66 would also disrupt ongoing multi-year efforts by municipalities to address climate change, meet state-mandated energy and air quality goals, and participate in regional initiatives aimed at attracting sustainable businesses and supporting economic development.

Exiting RGGI is also fundamentally at odds with both state and local commitments to combating climate change and building resilient communities. Maryland’s municipalities have made considerable commitments to lowering greenhouse gas emissions and protecting residents from the impacts of climate change. Withdrawing from RGGI would undermine these commitments and make it even more difficult for local governments to fulfill their obligations and demonstrate climate leadership.

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.

While MML appreciates continued discussions about how to best support local governments and their residents, HB66 represents a step backward by removing a proven, collaborative policy tool along with the critical funding it generates. If the General Assembly is to consider fundamental changes to the state's approach to greenhouse gas mitigation, MML urges that any alternative approach must maintain predictable funding for municipal energy and resilience programs, protect communities most affected by pollution and high energy burdens, and ensure robust local government involvement in developing any new strategies.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests that the committee issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 66. MML believes public health, environmental quality, and the ability of municipalities to serve their residents are fundamentally at stake, and that continued participation in RGGI is essential to sustaining Maryland's progress toward cleaner air, stronger communities, and a safer climate future.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Tyler Brice: Manager, Advocacy and Public Policy, tylerb@mdmunicipal.org