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February 24, 2026

Support HB 897 Electricity Transmission and Distribution, Energy Storage, and Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Lower Bills and Local Power Act of 2026)

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV Supports HB 897 Electricity Transmission and Distribution, Energy Storage, and Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (Lower Bills and Local Power Act of 2026) and we thank Governor Moore for bringing this bill forward.

Maryland LCV is working to Power Maryland Forward, supporting **energy affordability** through **deployment of solar and storage, defense against more fossil fuels** and **unchecked utility profits**, while **getting the most out of the electricity grid we have**. HB 897 addresses each of these priorities.

HB 897 updates transmission development and planning to improve cost-effectiveness. First, it requires all Maryland electric companies that own or operate transmission lines designed to carry a voltage in excess of 69,000 volts to participate as members in a regional transmission organization (RTO). The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission offers a [return on equity \(ROE\) adder](#) for voluntary participation in RTOs for transmission utilities. Establishing a requirement for them to join RTOs removes this incentive and saves costs that get passed down to ratepayers. Second, it requires that all electric companies applying for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for a new transmission line to include at least one alternative proposal that uses advanced transmission technologies (ATTs) along with a written explanation comparing the cost-effectiveness, technical feasibility, and system benefits of each proposal. Lastly, it authorizes the Public Service Commission to develop performance-based incentives for deployment and operation of ATTs. [These technologies](#) can increase the capacity of existing transmission infrastructure, reduce congestion, improve reliability, and lower costs compared to building entirely new transmission lines. ATTs are greatly beneficial to ratepayers as they are cost-effective and have much quicker implementation timelines. Maryland LCV supports all measures that encourage their adoption.

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HB 897 also supports long-term energy affordability by establishing a Solar and Energy Storage Market Stabilization Program. The purpose of the program is to provide loans and grants for shovel-ready clean energy projects in order to stabilize and backfill investment gaps as the result of the loss of federal Investment Tax Credit. Tier 1 renewable energy sources, including solar and wind, are among the lowest-cost sources of new electricity generation and help stabilize electricity prices, improve grid reliability, and meet growing demand while advancing Maryland's [greenhouse gas reduction requirements](#) and [Renewable Portfolio Standard](#). Safeguarding these investments through targeted state funding will help ensure that cost-effective clean energy projects continue moving forward despite the loss of federal funding, protecting ratepayers from future cost increases, particularly in low- and moderate-income and overburdened communities.

HB 897 also allocates \$100 M of the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to ratepayer relief. We are supportive of this intent, and urge the money be used to support low to moderate income households.

Taken together, HB 897 represents a comprehensive approach to lowering electricity costs, strengthening grid reliability, and protecting clean energy deployment. By investing in grid efficiency and supporting renewable energy and storage, this legislation will help protect Maryland families from rising energy costs while ensuring the state remains on track to meet its climate goals.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on HB 897.