

Maryland House Committee on Environment and Transportation
Nuclear Energy Institute
Public Support of HB 970
February 24, 2026

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today in support of House Bill 970. My name is John Kotek and I am senior vice president for policy and public affairs at the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI). NEI is the national trade organization for the commercial nuclear energy industry. We have over 350 members in the nuclear power industry, including electric utilities, reactor designers, architect and engineering firms, fuel suppliers and service companies, universities and research laboratories, law firms, labor unions, and other stakeholders across the United States and around the world.

We applaud Maryland's consideration of House Bill 970, which expands the definition of eligible clean energy sources to include nuclear energy, specifically power generated by nuclear energy generating stations, including small modular reactors, as Tier 2 clean energy sources.

HB 970 ensures Maryland's clean energy policies align with the physical realities of the electric grid and the urgency of the state's climate commitments. Specifically, by including nuclear energy within the state's definition of eligible clean energy sources and allowing nuclear generation to qualify for clean energy credits, the General Assembly would strengthen grid reliability, protect ratepayers, and accelerate Maryland's progress towards its emissions reductions and energy security goals.

Nuclear Energy Is Maryland's Largest Source of Carbon-Free Electricity

Nuclear energy is the single largest source of carbon-free electricity in Maryland, accounting for three-quarters of the state's carbon-free generation. So far this decade, Calvert Cliffs 1 and 2 have operated at a capacity factor of more than 95 percent, highlighting first-hand how nuclear plants can operate around the clock, providing reliable, emissions-free power for up to 80 years or more.¹

In states that have recognized nuclear energy as clean energy within portfolio standards or clean energy credit programs, policymakers have preserved existing carbon-free generation, avoided millions of tons of emissions, and maintained thousands of family-sustaining jobs. Maryland should ensure that its clean energy framework fully values all carbon-free resources—including nuclear energy.

¹ <https://www.nei.org/getContentAsset/b31c89a7-d403-412d-a7a8-5b4b12f42761/8d8ff8d6-b2ae-401b-a63c-f6b108e809d2/Maryland-State-Fact-Sheet.pdf?language=en-US>

Clean Energy Credits Must Be Technology Neutral

Market-based solutions, such as prices on carbon or portfolio standards, empower American energy innovation while still acknowledging the fundamental threat of climate change. Clean energy standards are technology neutral and more aggressively reduce carbon emissions and cost to customers because of market pricing efficiencies. Several states have established portfolio programs, known as zero-emission credits, recognizing the valuable, carbon-free aspects of nuclear energy.

Many states have updated their portfolio standards or clean energy programs to include nuclear energy in recognition of its carbon-free attributes including Colorado, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Virginia. They have done so because achieving ambitious climate targets requires retaining and expanding all forms of clean, dispatchable generation.

And at the Federal level, the U.S. Congress has also recognized nuclear energy as a clean energy technology through both the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. Nuclear energy qualifies for the federal Section 45U zero-emission nuclear production tax credit as well as technology-neutral clean electricity tax credits (Sections 45Y and 48E).²

Protecting Ratepayers and Reliability

Maryland is part of the PJM regional transmission system, which is experiencing growing electricity demand and increasing reliability pressures. As electrification expands and new large loads connect to the grid, maintaining firm, dispatchable, carbon-free generation becomes even more critical.

Policies that exclude nuclear energy risk increasing price volatility and long-term system costs. Including nuclear energy in Maryland's Clean Energy Credit framework helps:

- Protect ratepayers from avoidable cost increases
- Maintain grid reliability
- Prevent backsliding in emissions reductions

Positioning Maryland for Advanced Nuclear Innovation

House Bill 970 is not only about recognizing existing generation. It also ensures Maryland's framework supports future innovation. As neighboring states modernize their energy policies, Maryland should ensure it remains competitive for emerging clean energy investment.

Advanced nuclear technologies, including small modular reactors and microreactors, offer enhanced safety features, flexible deployment options, and the ability to complement renewable resources.

² <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/zero-emission-nuclear-power-production-credit>

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States that establish inclusive, technology-neutral clean energy policies are positioning themselves to attract advanced nuclear investment. Maryland should ensure its statutes do not inadvertently close the door on these opportunities.

Conclusion

House Bill 970 modernizes Maryland's clean energy framework to reflect what is already true: nuclear energy is carbon-free, reliable, and essential to meeting the state's climate goals. Recognizing it within the Clean Energy Credit program strengthens Maryland's ability to decarbonize while protecting ratepayers and maintaining grid reliability.

NEI respectfully urges the Committee to advance HB 970.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to ensuring Maryland's energy future remains reliable, affordable, and clean. NEI stands ready to serve as a resource as this legislation moves forward.

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