

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary  
Anne Blackfield, Deputy Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor



**BILL: HB 897**

**POSITION: FAV - Favorable**

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

DATE: February 20, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Maryland Department of Disabilities

217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support for **HB 897, Lower Bills and Local Power Act of 2026**. This legislation represents a meaningful step toward modernizing Maryland's energy infrastructure, prioritizing energy storage, and strengthening the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) to help reduce utility costs for Maryland families.

People with disabilities in Maryland are disproportionately affected by limited incomes, higher living costs, and fixed or constrained financial resources. Many rely on monthly income sources that do not adjust quickly to rising utility costs, yet energy bills take up a larger share of their household budgets compared with higher-income households. Ensuring utility affordability is, therefore, of paramount importance to their health, safety, and ability to remain independent in their communities.

By investing in electricity transmission, distribution improvements, and energy storage advancements, this bill is designed to make the grid more efficient and resilient — which can translate into more stable and lower utility costs over time. Lower energy bills directly benefit individuals with limited incomes, including many people with disabilities who must balance essential expenses such as medications, care services, and adaptive equipment.

Leveraging the SEIF to support local power projects and clean energy investments can yield community-level savings and economic opportunities, helping families stretch their budgets further. Predictable, lower energy costs are a key component of financial stability for individuals and households with limited means.

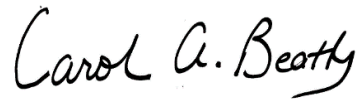
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Many people with disabilities often live on fixed incomes (e.g., Social Security, Supplemental Security Income) and spend proportionally more of their income on utilities. Policies that proactively address energy affordability are critical to reducing financial strain and ensuring equitable access to essential services.

This legislation aligns with our shared goals of promoting economic equity, protecting vulnerable residents from rising costs, and strengthening Maryland's energy future. For these reasons, MDOD respectfully requests **a favorable report on HB 897**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Beatty  
Secretary, Department of Disabilities