



The Town of Washington Grove
P. O. Box 216
300 Grove Avenue
Washington Grove, MD 20880
voice: 301-926-22566
email: mayor@washingtongrovermd.gov

February 19, 2026

To: Chair Marc Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

From: The Town of Washington Grove, District 39

Re: HB 950 - County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act
Position: Support

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Washington Grove to urge you to act favorably on *The County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act*. It will create certainty in the path for municipalities in Maryland to own their streetlight fixtures and upgrade them to current technology and design of their own choosing.

In the 19 years since 2007 Maryland law first allowed municipalities to purchase their streetlights from Pepco, *no purchases have taken place*. The impediment lies in the failure of Pepco to provide a clear and fair process for municipalities to do so. Since 2022, when we became parties in Public Service Commission (“PSC”) Case No. 9703, the municipalities of Chevy Chase Village, the Town of Washington Grove, the City of College Park, the City of Gaithersburg, Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase, and the Village of North Chevy Chase (“the Municipalities”) have been actively seeking to secure a fair streetlight purchase process from Pepco. Yet, in spite of mandates from the PSC, Pepco continues to create obstacles.

Maryland is an “energy desert” as reported in a recent analysis by the US Energy Information Administration (Jan 16, 2025). Maryland consumes almost six times more energy than it produces. Saving energy is critical for our region. Significant reductions in energy consumption has been realized by municipalities around the U.S.A. that own their own streetlights, as well as lower energy costs, modernization and improved service. Yet few in Maryland do.

Pepco, as a regulated public utility monopoly, has failed to keep pace with modern street lighting, asset management, accurate billing and timely service. Municipal streetlights are typically the largest of a city or town’s electricity costs. Yet only 4% of the 66,000 Pepco-owned streetlights in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties have been upgraded to LED. The remaining 96% of streetlight use high pressure sodium (HPS) lights for which fixtures are no longer made, and which are very energy inefficient compared to the newer LED technology. The magnitude of energy waste with these old streetlights is staggering.

While Pepco has failed to upgrade their streetlights, Pepco also continues to thwart the Municipalities from purchasing Pepco streetlights and having the opportunity to upgrade streetlights themselves. In 2022, the PSC rejected Pepco's flawed street lighting upgrade proposal after objections from the Municipalities and other parties about its failure to meet local needs. The PSC directed Pepco to start a dialogue with the Municipalities to forge a real path to Maryland municipal streetlight ownership.

As part of the administrative proceeding and Case No. 9703, the Municipalities sought to reach agreement with Pepco on a Model Agreement for Sale of Streetlights and Model License Agreement for Overhead Electrical Service and Attachments to Utility Poles for Street and Area Lighting (together, "Model Agreements") in an effort to advance the acquisition process beyond a stand still. The Public Service Commission supported this effort. The Municipalities and Pepco have negotiated since 2022 and have been able to reach a consensus on most of the issues surrounding the Model Agreements. However, Pepco is seeking to require unnecessary, new, non-industry standard devices for streetlights purchased by municipalities that are not required by any utility in the USA, that Pepco does not require of themselves, that Pepco has not mandated elsewhere in their service territory for municipal-owned lights (DC and Gaithersburg), and which would introduce new failure points to each streetlight. Such unnecessary devices increase costs creating a barrier to entry, and are frustrating efforts to acquire the streetlights at reasonable cost.

The Municipalities seek to resolve these remaining issues through adoption of HB 950 so that local governments can finally purchase their streetlights and begin conversion to LED, thereby saving energy and cost and helping the environment.

Speaking for the Town of Washington Grove and other Maryland municipalities and their residents, I ask that your Committee **report favorably on HB 950** - the "*County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act*".

Respectfully yours,



John G. Compton
Mayor, Town of Washington Grove

Cc:
Maryland Senator Nancy J. King
Maryland Delegate Gabriel Acevero
Maryland Delegate Greg Wims
Maryland Delegate Lesley J. Lopez
US Senator Angela D. Alsobrooks
US Senator Christopher Van Hollen Jr.
Congressman Jamie B. Raskin