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VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Delegate Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 1147 (Public Service Commission
Flexibility Act) – **Favorable**

Dear Chair Korman:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony **urging a favorable report on House Bill 1147.**

I am a partner at the law firm Gordon Feinblatt and Chair of its Energy and Environmental Practice Group. I am writing today as a private citizen. However, between my colleagues and myself at Gordon Feinblatt, we handle dozens of separate matters concurrently before the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) at any given time. These matters range from solar permitting for individual projects, to rulemaking proceedings with significant statewide importance, and even certain utility rate cases.

I have practiced before the PSC for 14 years. In that time, I have seen the agency's workload grow exponentially as the State passes new energy and climate policies. Implementing these policies requires a well-staffed agency with wide-ranging, dynamic expertise, including administrative law judges, economists, engineers, climate change experts, and policy analysts, among others. This growing workload is layered on top of the PSC's traditional responsibility to regulate utility rates, which is an extremely time-consuming and detail-oriented process that recurs year after year.

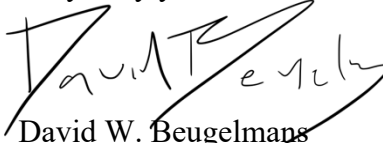
Throughout my career, I have been consistently impressed by the professionalism of the PSC's Technical Staff. The breadth of subject matter they cover, and the sheer volume they handle, is remarkable. At the same time, I have also witnessed the strain that has grown over these 14 years as the PSC's workload has increased. The number of important bills passed each year increases the demands on the PSC's subject matter experts, and energy programs such as the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and community solar, which require ministerial approvals, place additional demands on clerical staff to process applications.

In addition, we have recently seen an unprecedented number of applications for Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCNs) to construct new generation and transmission lines, which are all handled through a complex and time-consuming evidentiary process. This significant increase in applications – approximately 1000% from prior years – is good news as Maryland seeks to address resource adequacy issues. However, these cases are handled by a team of only four Public Utility Law Judges, and from what I can tell, their available resources have not kept pace with the workload. The PSC needs flexibility to scale as needed to facilitate Maryland's energy transition and lower energy costs.

House Bill 1147 would provide the PSC with needed flexibility to manage its personnel and hire outside experts to assist as needs arise. I personally support this legislation because I have observed an agency under strain that needs relief to more effectively execute its mission. Many important policy goals advanced by this Committee will ultimately make their way to the PSC for implementation, and it is critical that the agency is properly staffed so that these initiatives are implemented well and on time.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report** on HB 1147.

Very truly yours,



David W. Beugelmans