



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Gloria Brown Burnett, Interim Secretary*

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON HB0897 ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION, ENERGY STORAGE, AND MARYLAND STRATEGIC ENERGY INVESTMENT FUND (LOWER BILLS AND LOCAL POWER ACT OF 2026) - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 897 (HB 897).

With offices in every Maryland jurisdiction, DHS provides preventive and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment and career opportunities to help Marylanders reach their full potential. The DHS Family Investment Administration (FIA) administers critical energy assistance through the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP).

HB 897 would modernize Maryland's energy infrastructure while providing immediate and necessary economic relief to all residents. By authorizing the deployment of funds from the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund, this bill would facilitate a \$100 million allocation to be issued as direct credits to residential distribution customers. HB 897 would mitigate the rising cost of living and ensure energy remains accessible and affordable for all Marylanders, including low-income households served by OHEP. HB 897 would require electric companies to participate in a regional transmission organization and require the Public Service Commission to develop performance-based incentives for advanced technologies that drive systemic efficiency and long-term ratepayer savings.

HB 897 would establish a sustainable framework balancing immediate financial assistance with a resilient, cost-effective energy future for Maryland. The Solar and Energy Storage Market Stabilization Program would bridge critical investment gaps for clean energy projects whose future is less certain due to the expiration of federal incentives. Additionally, by prioritizing "shovel-ready" projects and incentivizing community solar and energy storage, this bill would reduce the energy burden for low- to moderate-income households and overburdened communities. OHEP is already pursuing community solar partnerships to lower the bills of customers, and HB 897 would build on those efforts. Utilizing existing highway rights-of-way for transmission and battery storage would bypass traditional siting delays, ensuring that reliability improvements and cost-saving measures reach OHEP customers and all Maryland households quickly.

For these reasons, DHS respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 897. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony for the Committee's consideration. If additional information is needed, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at [justin.hayes1@maryland.gov](mailto:justin.hayes1@maryland.gov).

In service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gloria Brown Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gloria Brown Burnett  
Interim Secretary