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Environment and Transportation
Committee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10, 2026

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Korman, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 1442.

Across Maryland, families are feeling the weight of rising utility costs. Electricity is not a luxury. It is something every household depends on every single day to keep the lights on, heat and cool their homes, and power the basic necessities of modern life. When those costs rise, families feel it immediately.

As legislators, we have a responsibility to examine every tool available to ensure Marylanders are not paying more than they should for essential services like electricity.

In 2021, the Maryland General Assembly took an important step in that direction by passing House Bill 768, which established a Community Choice Aggregation pilot program in Montgomery County. The goal was to determine whether a county could use the collective purchasing power of its residents and small businesses to negotiate competitive electricity supply contracts on their behalf.

Community choice aggregation is a straightforward concept. Instead of each household navigating the electricity supply market on its own, a county can aggregate the electricity demand of thousands of residents and negotiate supply contracts at scale. Utilities continue to operate the transmission and distribution infrastructure, but the community has the opportunity to secure electricity supply through a larger and more coordinated purchasing structure.

Since that legislation passed, Montgomery County has worked with the Public Service Commission, utilities, consumer advocates, and energy suppliers to establish the framework necessary to implement the program responsibly. That work has demonstrated that this model can operate within Maryland's existing regulatory system while maintaining strong consumer protections and oversight.

Most importantly, analysis conducted through this process has shown the potential for meaningful savings for residents. Estimates suggest that households participating in a community choice

aggregation program could see electricity supply savings ranging from approximately eighty dollars to more than two hundred dollars per year depending on usage.

We have heard testimony from constituents who are forced to choose between rising utility costs and paying for rent, tuition, prescriptions, or other basic necessities. For many families, that difference matters. It means a little more room in a household budget, greater stability in electricity prices during periods of market volatility, and another tool communities can use to help manage energy costs on behalf of their residents.

House Bill 1442 builds directly on the work the General Assembly began in 2021.

Rather than limiting community choice aggregation to a single jurisdiction, this legislation allows counties across Maryland to explore whether this approach could benefit their residents. It also clarifies participation for certain electric cooperative territories and strengthens the structure of the Community Choice Energy Workgroup so the program continues to operate with transparency and accountability.

Importantly, this bill does not require any county to establish a community choice aggregation program. Instead, it gives local governments the ability to evaluate whether this model makes sense for their communities. Any county that chooses to move forward must still develop a comprehensive aggregation plan, provide notice to residents, and receive approval from the Public Service Commission before a program can begin.

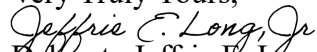
Residents also retain the ability to opt out at any time and choose another electricity supplier or remain on standard offer service.

House Bill 1442 ensures that the work already begun in Montgomery County is not limited to a single community. It allows Maryland to continue exploring an approach that could provide greater purchasing power, more stable electricity pricing, and additional tools for communities working to protect residents from rising energy costs.

Energy markets are evolving, and the way we purchase and manage electricity must evolve as well. Community choice aggregation offers Maryland an opportunity to explore a more coordinated, community-driven approach while maintaining strong state oversight and consumer protections.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 1442.

Very Truly Yours,


Delegate Jeffrie E. Long, Jr.