



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

COUNCILMEMBER LAURIE-ANNE SAYLES

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR

AT LARGE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Favorable Testimony for HB 950, *Public Utilities - Street Lighting Equipment - Acquisitions and Reporting (County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act)*

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and the Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

I write in strong support of [House Bill 950](#), legislation that would finally give Montgomery County and our municipalities the authority to acquire the street lighting equipment installed along our roadways. HB950 is about local control, public safety, and fiscal responsibility. At a time when every dollar matters, we should have the flexibility to manage this essential infrastructure in a way that keeps our communities safe while delivering savings to ratepayers.

Today, there are approximately 28,000 Pepco-owned wooden pole streetlights leased to Montgomery County, and the majority have yet to be converted to energy-efficient LED lighting. That means higher costs, slower upgrades, and missed opportunities to improve visibility and safety on our streets.

This bill is not a new idea. It is long overdue. For years, our Montgomery County Department of Transportation and members of the Montgomery County Council have urged the State to authorize this change. We are ready to take responsibility. We simply need the authority to do so.

As Chair of the Council's Health and Human Services Committee, I view this legislation not only as an infrastructure issue, but as a public health and safety priority. Safe, well-lit streets are essential for residents walking in their neighborhoods, children traveling to and from school, seniors accessing transit, and commuters navigating our roads after dark. Lighting directly impacts pedestrian safety, crime prevention, and overall community well-being. If we are serious about protecting our most vulnerable residents and advancing our Vision Zero goals to eliminate traffic fatalities, we must have greater control over how our roadways are illuminated.

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By authorizing us to purchase and manage the streetlights that line our local roads, House Bill 950 would enable us to accelerate LED conversions, modernize aging infrastructure, and respond more quickly to outages and emergencies. Local ownership means local accountability and faster action.

Other jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, have already taken this step and are ahead of us in modernizing their lighting systems. Montgomery County should not be left behind.

As an At-Large Councilmember serving on the Economic Development Committee, I also recognize the broader impact of this legislation. When local governments assume ownership and maintenance of streetlights, it opens the door for small and local contractors to compete for maintenance and upgrade work, supporting job creation and strengthening our local economy.

For these reasons, I respectfully and strongly urge a favorable vote on House Bill 950.

Sincerely,



Laurie-Anne Sayles
Councilmember At-Large