



TESTIMONY OF
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HB897- LOWER ENERGY BILLS AND LOCAL ENERGY ACT
FAVORABLE
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 24TH, 2026

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

The Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund applauds Governor Moore for developing and introducing the Lower Energy Bills and Local Energy Act. This important legislation will:

Save ratepayers money by ending the payments that PJM pays our utilities to be part of PJM.

Currently utilities in Maryland are not required to be part of a regional transmission organization. To entice them to join, PJM pays the utilities in order to get them to participate in PJM. The money that PJM pays the utility companies comes out of our energy bills. By requiring utilities to be part of a regional transmission organization, it will eliminate the need for PJM to give ratepayer money to utilities.

Require a cost benefit analysis for every new transmission line.

Under the Lower Energy Bills and Local Power Act whenever a developer requests a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to build a new transmission line, the developer must also submit a cost-benefit analysis comparing that new transmission line to meeting the same transmission need with advanced transmission technologies.

Require Maryland utilities to submit regular reports to the PSC detailing how they plan to deploy Advanced Transmission Technologies.

Utilities have an incentive to deploy the most expensive transmission and distribution solutions. The more expensive a capital expenditure project is, the more money their shareholders will make. This unfortunate incentive often prevents utilities from deploying lower cost, faster to deploy grid technologies to meet transmission and distribution needs. Requiring them to submit plans for how they are deploying grid enhancing technologies will help ensure cost effective technologies are being used.

Allow MEA to use SEIF funds to provide grants and loans to shovel-ready solar projects.

The federal government eliminated some of the clean energy tax credits that had been established in the Inflation Reduction Act. This has the potential to leave certain solar projects that are near completion in the lurch. The MEA funds dedicated in the Lower Energy Bills and Local Energy Act will make sure shovel ready solar projects have the grants and loans they need to come to fruition.

Identify existing state-owned rights of way that could be used to site new transmission lines, distribution lines, or batteries.

It will save costs and property disruption if transmission infrastructure can be placed along existing rights of way owned by the state. By identifying corridors where transmission infrastructure could be sited, the Lower Energy Bills and Local Energy Act allows for consolidation of state infrastructure and lowers costs by avoiding unnecessary and disruptive eminent domain proceedings.

Each of these actions will reduce energy costs and help the state meet its clean energy commitments. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB897.