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## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 79, the Climate Solutions Affordability Act.

Let me be clear at the outset:

This bill is not about abandoning environmental goals. It is about ensuring that Maryland's climate policies are affordable, reliable, and grounded in reality.

### **Maryland Is Facing an Energy Affordability and Reliability Crisis**

Across the state, Marylanders are opening their electric bills with shock and fear. Constituents from every income level; seniors on fixed incomes, working families, small business owners, and individuals dependent on life-sustaining medical equipment, are contacting our offices in distress.

Electricity costs are rising sharply, grid reliability is weakening, and emergency alerts are becoming increasingly common. These conditions did not emerge by accident. They are the predictable outcome of aggressive energy mandates implemented without adequate consideration for affordability, infrastructure readiness, or reliability safeguards

Maryland now imports roughly 40% of its electricity, with projections indicating that figure could approach 80% by the early 2030s. At the same time, we have retired or scheduled the retirement of thousands of megawatts of dispatchable, baseload generation, far faster than replacement capacity has come online

### **Power Is Retiring Faster Than It Is Being Replaced**

In recent years, Maryland has lost approximately 6,000 megawatts of generation capacity, enough to power nearly five million homes. Meanwhile, current in-state wind and solar output replaces only a fraction of that capacity on a reliable basis. This gap has forced Maryland ratepayers to absorb:

- Costly Reliability Must Run (RMR) agreements

- Billions in new transmission investments
- Increasing exposure to outages and price volatility

These costs are not theoretical; they are already embedded in monthly utility bills.

Even grid regulators have warned "to avoid policies that would push existing resources off the system until an adequate and equivalent amount of generation is online to support it." That warning applies directly to Maryland.

### **HB 79 Is a Responsible Course Correction**

When the Climate Solutions Now Act passed in 2022, many of us shared the same concern: the mandates were ambitious, but the guardrails were missing. HB 79 supplies those guardrails.

#### **This bill does one essential thing:**

It requires that climate mandates be implemented to the extent economically practicable.

That phrase is not radical. It is used by the EPA, embedded in federal environmental law, and widely understood to mean implementation that accounts for:

- Technological readiness
- Cost relative to public benefit
- Reliability and public safety
- Broader economic and social impacts

In plain English, HB 79 ensures we do not force Maryland families and businesses to jump off a diving board without knowing whether there is water in the pool.

### **Why This Matters Now**

Under current law, Maryland faces a cascade of mandates coming due simultaneously:

- Net-zero greenhouse gas requirements
- Building Energy Performance Standards affecting roughly 9,000 buildings and nearly 1 billion square feet of space
- Billions in required efficiency and electrification spending
- Electrification mandates without sufficient generation to support them

These policies, taken together, threaten affordable housing, strain small businesses, and disproportionately harm lower-income households, precisely the people we claim to protect.

**HB 79 does not repeal these policies.** It simply puts the brakes on reckless implementation and restores legislative responsibility before irreversible damage is done

HB 79 is the responsible, pragmatic solution. It preserves climate goals while protecting families, seniors, and small businesses from dangerously high energy costs and grid instability.

For those reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 79.