



Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: H.B. 0521 - Electric Companies and Gas Companies - Customer Bill

Surcharge - Repeal

Position: Oppose

Hearing Date: February 17, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club opposes HB0521 and urges the Committee to adopt an unfavorable report. This bill would repeal the surcharges that fund EmPOWER Maryland, thus in effect ending the program.

The EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act of 2008 created the EmPOWER program to incentivize energy efficiency and conservation efforts. EmPOWER includes programs run by Maryland's five largest electric utilities that help Maryland's households and businesses save energy and money through a variety of incentives, such as free or discounted energy audits, weatherization, and rebates on efficient appliances. It also includes similar programs targeted at limited income consumers, which are run by the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The EmPOWER programs have a proven, robust track record of success in reducing energy usage and saving Marylanders money. According to the Maryland Public Service Commission's 2025 EmPOWER report, since 2008, EmPOWER Maryland has:

- Saved a total of 3,589 MW of power.
- Created over \$15.8 billion in lifetime savings from an investment of \$4.6 billion.
- Provided tens of thousands of Marylanders with free or discounted energy audits, weatherization, and efficient appliances and provided businesses with discounts and incentives for energy efficient upgrades¹.

At a time when over 450,000 Maryland families qualify for energy assistance, and families across income levels are struggling to keep up with spiking energy costs, repealing these demonstrably effective programs would only serve to aggravate the pain of high energy costs. As such, the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges an unfavorable report on HB0521.

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¹ Maryland Public Service Commission. *The EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act Report of 2025*. Baltimore, MD: MD PSC 2025
<https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/2025-EmPOWER-Maryland-Energy-Efficiency-Act-Standard-Report-Final.pdf>