The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

House Bill 1525

Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, EmPOWER Energy Efficiency Programs, and Net Energy Metering

Position: Oppose
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: March 10, 2026
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **OPPOSES** HB 1525.

Bill Summary

HB 1525 would require the Governor to withdraw Maryland from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) by January 1, 2027, allowing re-entry only if all other PJM states (DE, IL, IN, KY, MI, NJ, NC OH, PA, TN, VA, WV, and DC) join RGGI or if Maryland becomes and remains a net electricity exporter. The bill would also eliminate a customer utility bill surcharge that funds the EmPOWER Maryland program, and would alter net-metering rates remitted to customer-generators who generate excess energy. The Governor would be required to notify the General Assembly within five days of withdrawing from and rejoining RGGI.

Position Rationale

HB 1525 would increase energy bills and increase pollution by eliminating or undermining the successful RGGI and EmPOWER Maryland programs.

RGGI has proven to be a vital funding mechanism, generating over $1.6 billion for Maryland since 2008; generating $61.4 million alone in the recent September 2025 auction. RGGI revenue is deposited into the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) to support essential programs in energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation electrification and infrastructure, and climate mitigation. For context, RGGI revenue was 39.8% of overall SEIF funding in 2025, and annual revenues are projected to be approximately $276 million per year for the next two fiscal years. By investing in ratepayers, RGGI is proven to reduce energy costs and grow the economy while reducing pollution.

HB 1525 would eliminate the customer utility bill surcharge that currently funds the EmPOWER Maryland program and other energy efficiency and conservation initiatives. Although the bill permits electric or gas companies to establish their own program to uphold the State's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, it fails to provide any mechanism for funding such programs. In 2023, the EmPOWER Maryland program was estimated to have saved 16,441,741 megawatt-hours (MWh) of total energy and 3,231 megawatts (MW) of peak demand. This is equivalent to reducing 11.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, which is the same as taking over 2.7 million vehicles off the road or eliminating the energy use of over 2.2 million homes for one year. As a result, for every $1 invested in EmPOWER, Marylanders save $2.

Accordingly, MDE asks for an **UNFAVORABLE** report for **HB 1525.**

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