



HB1525 - UNFAVORABLE  
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HB1525 – Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, EmPOWER Energy Efficiency Programs and Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Meeting of the Transportation and Environment Committee

March 10, 2026

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge an unfavorable report on HB1525.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

The clean energy transition is an essential part of that future. One of the most effective ways Maryland has reduced greenhouse gas emissions and supported the clean energy transition is through our longstanding participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

The cleanest, cheapest energy is the energy we don't need to use. RGGI has helped Maryland improve energy efficiency, resulting in decreased electricity demand despite a growing population and economy. It has encouraged the growth of clean, affordable renewable energy. Those improvements have allowed consumers in the RGGI states to save over \$1 billion in energy costs. It has created thousands of jobs and added over \$4 billion in economic value. And it has dramatically reduced pollution.

Carbon pollution from the electricity sector has been cut by more than half. It has also reduced emissions of many other dangerous pollutants – mercury, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter.<sup>1</sup> Our cleaner air brings many health benefits, especially for our children.<sup>2</sup> An analysis by Abt Associates<sup>3</sup> in 2017 showed

**Maryland**

**Table 7. Avoided Health Effects in MD due to RGGI**

Health Endpoint	Cases Avoided due to RGGI						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Acute Bronchitis	24	3	1	7	12	7	54
Adult Mortality	16 - 36	2 - 4	1 - 2	5 - 10	8 - 17	5 - 11	36 - 81
Asthma ER Visits	10	1	<1	3	5	3	23
Asthma Exacerbations	469	55	26	132	220	134	1,036
Cardiovascular Hospital Admissions	5	1	<1	2	3	2	12
Infant Mortality	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Lower Respiratory Symptoms	310	36	18	89	148	91	692
Minor Restricted Activity Days	13,196	1,560	759	3,815	6,347	3,862	29,538
Non-fatal Heart Attacks	1.6 - 15	0 - 2	0 - 1	0 - 4	1 - 8	1 - 5	4 - 34
Respiratory Hospital Admissions	4	<1	<1	1	2	1	9
Upper Respiratory Symptoms	443	52	25	127	212	130	987
Work Loss Days	2,213	261	127	639	1,063	647	4,950

Their economic analysis suggested that avoiding those infant deaths was worth between \$ 880,000 and \$1,000,400, but we believe most parents and grandparents would say it was priceless.

EmPOWER Maryland is another vital energy program in Maryland. It was created by the General Assembly in 2008 in response to concerns about growing electricity demand and the capacity of our electric grid. In just its first four years, EmPOWER Maryland reduced energy usage by more than 2 million megawatt-hours per year and saved ratepayers \$250 million each year<sup>4</sup>. Those savings continue to add up with reduced energy use for those who use the program and lower electric rates for all of us. Each dollar invested in EmPOWER Maryland returns \$1.81 in benefits<sup>5</sup>. In a time when energy bills are rising and increased

<sup>1</sup> “The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Is a Model for the Nation,” July 14, 2021, <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/regional-greenhouse-gas-initiative-model-nation>.

<sup>2</sup> Frederica Perera et al., “Co-Benefits to Children’s Health of the U.S. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative,” *Environmental Health Perspectives* 128, no. 7 (2020): 077006, <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP6706>; “RGGIHealthStudyExecutiveSummaryJan2017,” n.d.

<sup>3</sup> “Analysis of the Public Health Impacts of RGGI 2009-14 Appendix - State Level,” n.d., accessed February 4, 2026, <https://www.abtglobal.com/sites/default/files/files/Projects/RGGI%20state%20level%20results.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> “EmPOWER Maryland Planning History,” Maryland Energy Administration, accessed March 6, 2026, <https://energy.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>5</sup> Md. Energy Adm., “EmPOWER Maryland Planning History.”

demand is again straining our grid, it seems absurd to cut or undermine EmPOWER.

Community solar is a popular and growing program in Maryland. It allows customers to cut their electricity costs while supporting clean, renewable energy. I am one of many Elders Climate Action Maryland members who are satisfied customers of a community solar program. There is not yet enough community solar in Maryland to meet the demand, and we do not want to see anything done that makes it harder for customers to get community solar.

This bill's shortsighted attempt to withdraw Maryland from RGGI and to undermine the EmPOWER Energy Efficiency Program and community solar would not help to solve the affordability crisis. It would seriously harm our health and our economy, exacerbate the climate crisis, and reduce customer choice. For all of these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on HB1525.

Thank you for your time and consideration.