



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 24, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 897 - FIRST READER

SHORT TITLE: ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION, ENERGY STORAGE, AND MARYLAND STRATEGIC ENERGY INVESTMENT FUND (LOWER BILLS AND LOCAL POWER ACT OF 2026)

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: LETTER OF SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

This legislation addresses several facets of Maryland's energy landscape, including enhanced accountability for utilities and regional transmission, grid modernization and deployment of technology, customer rate relief, and funding for clean energy projects. The bill builds upon previous administrative actions, including Executive Order 01.01.2025.27 - "Building an Affordable and Reliable Energy Future" and aims to achieve a balance between increasing energy supply, ensuring affordability, and meeting the state's renewable energy goals.

HB 897 helps clarify the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) process for transmission projects. Additionally, the bill requires the Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) to work with MDOT to develop processes and conduct a study regarding the siting of electricity lines and battery energy storage systems within existing state and interstate right-of-ways (highways). PPRP's Smart DG tool will supply critical technical information to help assess suitable sites. While this bill would increase workloads, it also includes funding from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SIEF)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PPRP performs the environmental and socioeconomic impact analyses of CPCN cases, including transmission, and also other projects/tasks as requested by the PSC. This legislation would expand upon the existing process by requiring PPRP to analyze the proposed use of Advanced Transmission Technologies, assess utilities' alternative proposals using Advanced Transmission Technologies, and review and comment on the transmission report.

PPRP is currently reviewing three active transmission cases and an additional nine in pre-applications. With the need to modernize Maryland's energy grid, the department expects the number of applications to increase in the coming years.

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BILL EXPLANATION

HB 897 requires electric companies operating high-voltage transmission lines to become members of a regional transmission organization, including an alternative option utilizing advanced transmission technologies when proposing new transmission lines, and submit triennial reports detailing potential uses of advanced technologies.