



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

WILL JAWANDO
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE
CHAIR, EDUCATION & CULTURE COMMITTEE
PLANNING, HOUSING, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

February 20, 2026

Montgomery County Councilmember Will Jawando
Testimony Supporting HB 950
The County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 950, which would give Montgomery County and our municipalities the tools they need to take control of aging, poorly maintained street lighting infrastructure and deliver safer, more energy-efficient lighting for our residents.

Montgomery County currently leases approximately 28,000 Pepco-owned wood pole street lights that consume roughly 22 gigawatt-hours of electricity each year. Despite a clear national shift toward LED technology, only a small fraction of these lights have been upgraded. Meanwhile, the Public Service Commission's 2024 corrective action order against Pepco for slow repairs and inadequate recordkeeping confirmed what our residents already know: the current system is failing them.

This is fundamentally a public safety issue. Nationally, nighttime pedestrian fatalities have risen dramatically over the past three decades even as daytime incidents have remained flat. Here in Montgomery County, we have seen the tragic consequences firsthand, including a 2018 fatality on Randolph Road near Wheaton High School where a driver struck and killed a person riding a bicycle at night. Our residents deserve better, and we should not have to wait on a utility's timeline to get it.

Jurisdictions that have taken ownership of their street lighting, including the District of Columbia, are already seeing meaningful cost savings, faster maintenance, and significant reductions in energy use after converting to LED. HB 950 creates a clear, fair framework for Montgomery County and our municipalities to do the same by acquiring utility-owned lights at fair market value, choosing competitive energy suppliers, and making upgrades on our own terms.

This legislation represents exactly the kind of practical, forward-looking investment our communities need. I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 950.