



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

To: Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee.  
Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Guyton and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate on Climate Change  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.

Subject: SB 841 AND HB 1532- Utility Relief

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) is a faith-based advocacy organization, working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs. We are grateful for your efforts to protect Maryland ratepayers from skyrocketing utility bills, there are provisions in both **SB 841** and **HB 1532** that we support.

We support keeping many of the provisions from **SB 841** including:

- The Senate language on Net Energy Metering,
- The negotiated agreement with MACo on streamlining of permitting for rooftop solar,
- A Prevailing wage for solar projects,
- Including language that codifies a voluntary Clean Capacity Program (Demand Response) and creates a rating program that prioritizes bringing your own clean energy,
- Defining Data Centers as large load customers,
- The full 1200 watt limit for plug in Balcony Solar.

We also support keeping many of the House provisions from **HB 1532** including the language that would:

- Require 20% of RGGI funds be directed to clean energy programs,
- Cap Executive Pay,
- Provide additional information on consumer bills (originally in HB 540),
- Prohibit forecasted ratemaking, and
- Provide for state tracking and make transparency requirements for the registry for data centers available to the public.

*However, it is critical that modest ratepayer relief is not eclipsed by other policies that will increase energy costs in the future, make Maryland less energy secure, and/or undermine our climate goals. We are alarmed and disappointed with many of the anti-consumer changes made in the Senate, and urge your reconsideration of these measures that will actually increase long term energy prices. These include:*

- Removing the prohibition on forecasted ratemaking,
- Granting the utilities “performance incentives” for falling below projected spending,
- Limiting the scope of executive pay provisions for utilities, and
- Reducing utility transparency measures.

In addition, while helping Maryland's electric ratepayers is very important, we must prioritize the least expensive solutions that help reduce climate pollution. We urge using incentives to create more solar energy—the cheapest and fastest way to develop new power generation—over expensive nuclear power. We support policies that focus on energy efficiency over energy generation. Finally, we support legislation that would ensure effective safeguards against costly data centers.

Thank you,

*Phil Webster, PhD*

Lead Advocate, Climate Change UULM-MD