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**Committee: Finance**

**Testimony on: SB583 “Investor-Owned Utilities – Prevailing Wage”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: February 16, 2024**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on SB583. This legislation would expand the existing assurance in state law that individuals who work on our important underground electric and gas infrastructure are compensated fairly so as to now also provide this assurance to those who work on above-ground electric and gas infrastructure. Specifically, current law requires investor-owned utilities to mandate their contractors and sub-contractors to pay workers on underground infrastructure not less than the applicable prevailing wage. This legislation would apply the prevailing-wage provision to above-ground work as well.

The current law was enacted in 2021. After passing the House and Senate, the bill was vetoed by Governor Hogan, and the General Assembly then overrode the veto.

The Sierra Club, nationally and in Maryland, is committed to the principles of equity, justice, and inclusion, and supports placing these principles at the center of environmental initiatives. These principles include respecting and supporting the rights of workers, their ability to have good jobs, earn a decent living, and enjoy occupational health and safety protections.

This bill is a straightforward way for Maryland to continue to support its energy workforce. We urge a favorable report.

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