



SB0525 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards (Grid Reliability and Inclusive Distribution Act)

Date: February 15, 2022

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

The undersigned organizations express their strong support for **SB0525 - Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards** and thank the sponsor, Delegate Lorig Charkoudian for introducing this important piece of legislation.

The environmental community and partners throughout Maryland have worked hard to set clean energy goals and climate commitments. This body and the Public Service Commission have played an integral role in those policies. To support Maryland's clean energy future, we must also invest in Maryland's electricity distribution grid. The Public Service Commission has begun this process by creating the Distribution System Planning Work Group. With federal infrastructure funds coming to Maryland, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity for grid investments that will help us meet our state goals and build an energy grid ready for the future.

The GRID Act will support and guide the PSC in the grid improvement planning process.

The GRID Act:

- Defines how we will meet state climate goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, expanding our use of renewable energy, promoting equity, supporting family-sustaining employment, and ensuring energy resiliency and cost-effectiveness.
- Directs one-time federal infrastructure funding to support grid improvements. This works in tandem with grant funding from the Department of Energy to support grid modernization.
- Ensures representative engagement in the distribution grid planning processes, including:
 - Residential and commercial energy customers
 - Low-income communities
 - Environmental advocacy groups
 - Labor unions
 - Industry experts in electric vehicles, distributed energy resources, and distribution planning
- Requires the PSC to issue an annual report about its progress.
- Supports family-sustaining jobs by requiring that all distribution grid upgrade projects:
 - Offer the area prevailing wage for each trade employed
 - Provide health and retirement benefits
 - Participate in apprenticeship programs registered with the state for the trade
 - Develop a plan to recruit and retain state residents, including returning citizens, women, minority individuals, and veterans

Modernizing our electricity grid is a critical step as our state does its part to respond to climate change and transition to clean energy. SB0525 will help Maryland build an updated, resilient electricity grid that will support the clean-energy economy of the future.

Thank you for your consideration of SB0525. For all the reasons stated above, we urge a favorable vote from the committee on SB0525.

Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Clean Water Action
Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition
Climate Law & Policy Project
Elders Climate Action DMV
Greenbelt Climate Action Network
HoCo Climate Action
Indivisible Howard County MD
Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA)
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Legislative Coalition
MD Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Sierra Club Maryland Chapter
Sunrise Movement Baltimore
Sunrise Movement Maryland
The Nature Conservancy
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Maryland WISE