

Committee: Finance Committee

Testimony on: SB 418 – Energy Generation, Transmission, and Storage Projects – Required Community Benefit Agreement and Labor Standards

Position: Favorable with Sponsor Amendments

Hearing Date: February 15, 2022

The organizations listed below respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 418 with Sponsor amendments, to require labor standards on energy generation projects greater than 2 MW that need a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) from the Maryland PSC.

Our organizations are committed to the principles of equity, justice, and inclusion, and are striving to put these principles at the center of environmental initiatives. These principles include respecting and supporting the rights of workers, which includes their ability to have good jobs, earn a decent living, and enjoy occupational health and safety protections.

We are proud to stand in solidarity with labor to advocate for stronger labor standards in all new energy generation for projects larger than 2 MWs.

As the future of Maryland’s energy economy transforms, it is critical that the jobs created are good, family wage or prevailing wage supporting jobs with benefits, as well as career training for local residents, women, and minorities.

Maryland should join Illinois, Connecticut, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington, Minnesota, and New York which have already passed laws to establish labor standards for energy projects.

The policy should apply to all new electricity generation over 2 MW, not just renewable energy. It is our understanding that the bill sponsor will be introducing amendments to that effect.

We are unsure about the use of the “Community Benefits Agreement” (CBA) (page 5 line 10) to anchor some of the labor provisions. We support many of the provisions that would be included, but are uncertain whether CBAs are the right mechanism to codify those provisions. We urge the sponsor and advocates to connect with industry representatives and other stakeholders to explore the best mechanism.

We thank Senator Feldman for his leadership and the Committee for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter and

Cedar Lane Environmental Justice Ministry

Greenbelt Climate Action Network.
Interfaith Power and Light (DC.MD.NoVA)
Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
MLC Climate Justice Wing and Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Strong Future Maryland
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.