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Committee: Finance
Testimony on: SB35 – “Procurement – Prevailing Wage – Applicability”
Position: Support
Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

The Maryland Sierra Club urges a favorable report on SB35. This legislation would better ensure that individuals who work on our important public work projects are compensated fairly. Specifically, the bill would increase the types of public work projects which are covered by existing law regarding prevailing wage payments. This bill is one of several introduced this session which would expand prevailing wage provisions and which the Sierra Club supports, including SB95 which also is being heard by this Committee on this date.

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, which includes their ability to have good jobs, earn a decent living, and enjoy occupational health and safety protections.

This commitment is reflected in our priority legislation this session (SB148) to transition Maryland off its reliance on coal-burning power plants. A critical component of the bill is the establishment of a Fossil Fuel Community Transition Fund to support impacted workers and communities. The fund would support paid worker retraining; financial compensation for impacted workers; investment in climate action projects in impacted communities; site deactivation, reuse, and remediation projects that hire from the high-quality workforce now employed at the coal plants; and compensation for a portion of lost local property tax revenues.

Two years ago, the Maryland Sierra Club prioritized passage of the Clean Energy Jobs Act, to support significant increases in wind and solar energy in Maryland, and, as well, training programs for growing our clean energy workforce.

The Sierra Club urges a favorable report on this bill.

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Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.