



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Maryland Public Service Commission
6 Saint Paul Street, 16th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202

December 17, 2019

Dear Chairman Stanek and Members of the Commission:

We urge the Public Service Commission to adopt a low-income energy savings goal as part of the EmPOWER Maryland portfolio. This will complement a policy that's already made Maryland a leading state for energy efficiency: Our nation-leading 2-percent-per-year electricity savings target enacted in 2017, extending and improving EmPOWER's previously recognized record of success since 2009. This savings target is one of the pillars of our state strategy to tackle climate change, and it is working as intended by boosting energy efficiency in buildings statewide.

However, without a target driving energy savings in low-income homes and buildings as well we lag behind other states in delivering services where they're needed most. Energy is a regressive cost, hitting those of limited means hardest. And nationally while low-income households dedicate 8% of their annual incomes to energy cost Maryland's pay 13%. Low-income residents pay 550 percent more as a percent of income than non-low-income Marylanders. Energy is also a substantial cost for building owners and managers, so energy efficiency is a key means of preserving affordable housing.

To be clear, Maryland has effective state programs that provide efficiency retrofits to low-income Marylanders: The Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development's Multifamily Energy Efficiency & Housing Affordability (MEEHA) program, the Low-Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP) and electric and gas utility programs. But at their current pace of energy-efficiency-measure delivery it would take 130 years to reach all 450,000 income eligible households. So far a mere 9 percent of eligible low-income Maryland households have received the weatherization assistance they sorely need.

Therefore the Public Service Commission should establish low-income energy savings targets such as those proposed by the Maryland Energy Efficiency Advocates: A 1% annual electric savings and .5 % annual gas savings for low-income households. A 1% savings goal alone would put Maryland on track to reach all 450,000 income eligible residents within 13 years.

Thanks to EmPOWER Maryland we've led the nation in combating climate change with energy efficiency since 2009. It's high time to enhance our portfolio to target and relieve inequitable energy cost burdens in as well.

Sincerely,

Senator Jill P. Carter, District 41
Senator Brian Feldman, District 15
Senator Katie Fry Hester, District 9
Senator Susan Lee, District 16
Senator Paul Pinsky, District 22
Senator Jim Rosapepe, District 21
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Delegate Al Carr, District 18
Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, District 20
Delegate Brian Crosby, District 29B
Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield, District 19
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, District 19
Delegate Debra Davis, District 28
Delegate Kathleen Dumais, District 15
Delegate Jessica Feldmark, District 12
Delegate Diana Fennell, District 47A
Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo, District 15
Delegate Michele Guyton, District 42B
Delegate Shaneka Henson, District 30A
Delegate Shelly Hettleman, District 11
Delegate Terri Hill, District 12
Delegate Steve Johnson, District 34A
Delegate Ken Kerr, District 3B
Delegate Robbyn Lewis, District 46
Delegate Karen Lewis Young, District 3A
Delegate Brooke Lierman, District 46
Delegate Mary Ann Lisanti, District 34A
Delegate Lesley Lopez, District 39
Delegate Sara Love, District 16
Delegate Eric Luedtke, District 14
Delegate David Moon, District 20
Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr, District 17
Delegate Edith J. Patterson, District 28
Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk, District 21
Delegate Lily Qi, District 15
Delegate Kirill Reznik, District 39
Delegate Mike Rogers, District 32

Delegate Emily Shetty, District 18
Delegate Stephanie Smith, District 45
Delegate Jared Solomon, District 18
Delegate Vaughn Stewart, District 19
Delegate Charles Sydnor, District 44B
Delegate Jen Terrasa, District 13
Delegate Alonzo Washington, District 22
Delegate Courtney Watson, District 9B
Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins, District 20