



House Bill 561: Electric Industry – Community Choice Energy

Dear Honorable Maryland House of Delegates Economic Matters Committee Members,

As the premier business advocate in Harford County, the Harford County Chamber of Commerce opposes **House Bill 561** and **Senate Bill 315**. Today, businesses are empowered to choose the company that supplies their electricity. Some businesses choose the most cost-effective product, some choose to pay a premium for renewable energy, and others opt for the utility’s default service.

This legislation erodes a business’ choice and allows a local government to choose for the business. After sending only one written message, **House Bill 561** and **Senate Bill 315** allow local governments to automatically enroll customers – including small businesses – in an aggregation program, if the customer fails to opt-out within 30 days. If the customer attempts to opt-out after 180 days, the legislation allows the local government to charge the customer an exit fee.

The Harford County Chamber of Commerce is concerned that many of our members will find themselves automatically enrolled in an aggregation program without their consent. Eighty percent of the chamber’s members are small businesses who do not focus on energy policy and may inadvertently miss the small window of opportunity to opt-out of a local government’s aggregation program.

This legislation jeopardizes our members’ opportunity to manage their energy supply and unnecessarily allows local governments to enroll electricity customers in aggregation programs, without their permission.

For these reasons, the Harford County Chamber of Commerce opposes **House Bill 561** and **Senate Bill 315** and respectfully requests an unfavorable committee report.

Sincerely,

Angela Rose

President & CEO

Harford County Chamber of Commerce

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