



Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG Director
House Economic Matters
HB 561 - “Electric Industry – Community Choice Energy”
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FAVORABLE

Maryland PIRG is a statewide, non-partisan, non-profit, citizen-funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state. For forty years we’ve stood up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in our democratic society.

More than a decade ago, powerful energy companies rewrote the rules that dictate how energy is bought and sold in Maryland. That decision continues to haunt us today.

This bill enables municipalities to set up alternatives to the investor-owned energy supply system. Community Choice Energy, as enabled by **HB0561**, allows residents in a community to control the type of electricity purchased by their local utility. CCE's can enable communities to negotiate lower rates and use more renewable energy.

Marylanders pay high electric bills, suffer from unfair pricing mechanisms that gouge consumers without offering benefits, and our electric grid is strained to the point where we could be facing brown-outs in the coming years.

There is a better way. By adopting consumer oriented rules to govern our electric system, making smart investments in energy efficiency and clean local sources of energy, decision-makers can lower bills, create local clean energy jobs, reduce our dependence on expensive and unsafe sources of energy, and improve the reliability of our electric grid.

We thank Delegate Charkoudian for introducing this bill and urge a favorable report.