

Democratic Municipal Officials

Committee: House Economic Matters

Testimony on: HB 561 - “Electric Industry – Community Choice Energy”

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 13, 2020

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 561, a bill that would enable local governments to implement a “community choice energy plan,” and thereby combine the electricity purchasing power of their residents to reduce ratepayer costs and select an electricity source favored by those residents.

As the President of the Maryland Chapter of the Democratic Municipal Officials (DMO) I understand the importance of empowering local governments (counties, cities, or groups of these entities) the choice to pool (“aggregate”) their residents to purchase electricity on their residents’ behalf from a source considered most favorable for and by the community. The democratization of energy purchase would keep residents engaged in the process either through direct engagement or through the ballot box.

Municipalities establishing a CCE plan would have the discretion to decide upon the criteria for selecting the electricity provider – e.g., cost, type of source (especially clean/renewable), etc. There are no mandates in this regard. As elected officials, we are directly answerable to our residents and as such can make sure that we are selecting a plan that would meet the needs of our community.

This bill provides a new option for county and local governments to serve our constituents as well as move Maryland as a whole closer to our green energy and green development goals. It is a win-win-win for Maryland. I urge a favorable report by this Committee.

Denise Mitchell, Chair, Maryland Democratic Municipal Officials
Council Member
College Park