

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 561: Electric Industry - Community Choice Energy
House Economic Matters Committee | February 13, 2020**

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The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund supports House Bill 561, legislation to empower counties and municipalities across Maryland to make decisions about energy generation that work best for their local ratepayers. We thank Del. Lorig Charkoudian for sponsoring this legislation to reduce electricity bills, create clean energy jobs, and reduce our climate pollution.

CCAN Action Fund and our grassroots network throughout Maryland is dedicated to achieving a net zero greenhouse gas emission economy by 2045, as is recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To create this future, we must invest in frontline and historically disadvantaged communities, protect workers, create good-paying union jobs, and result in greater wealth and income equality.

Not only does our electricity sector make up about 30% of the state's climate pollution, but it is the key to reducing emissions in the other two large sources of greenhouse gases: transportation and buildings. Climate scientists have championed the concept of "electrify everything" as a way to eliminate the use of fossil fuels to power our cars and heat our buildings. But "electrify everything" is dependent on a zero emissions electricity grid.

The General Assembly took a huge step forward when it passed the Clean Energy Jobs Act last year, requiring 50% clean electricity by 2030. Community Choice Energy (CCE) will give our local governments the ability to build on that success while the state legislature awaits a 2023 study on achieving 100% clean electricity by 2040. According to the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory, "about 100 CCEs spread across California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio procure more renewable energy than is required by [state] mandates." They do so while offering lower electricity bills for consumers through bulk purchasing power and economies of scale.

It is a myth that we have to choose between affordability today and a healthy climate tomorrow. CCE demonstrates how we can accomplish both simultaneously, providing an equitable path to a net zero emissions economy.

We urge the Committee to give House Bill 561 a favorable report.

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