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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 4, 2020

Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB 835 – County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act

Senate Bill 835 is enabling legislation that will allow local governments to expedite investments in energy efficient street lighting, thereby cutting our State's carbon footprint, improving public safety, and allowing municipalities to direct money saved on energy expenditures to other priorities.

We might take street lighting for granted, but the maintenance of these fixtures is one of the largest energy expenses for county and municipal governments. Advances in street lighting technology have allowed for those costs to come down across the country; unfortunately, many Maryland cities and counties have not been able to enjoy the breadth of benefits that modern street lighting provides.

For example, in my own Montgomery County, only 49 of some 28,000 utility-owned street lights in the Pepco territory are of the efficient LED variety.

SB835 allows municipalities to tackle this problem by authorizing local governments to assume ownership of street lighting infrastructure and then partner with the private sector to upgrade that infrastructure.

We have modeled the process of local governments assuming ownership of lighting infrastructure on existing procedures that have been successful in other states, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island, California and Pennsylvania. Among other provisions, local governments are required to compensate the current owners of street lighting infrastructure at a fair market price.

We need this legislation so that Marylanders can benefit from the energy saving innovations that other states have embraced.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB835.