

TESTIMONY FOR SB0315

ELECTRIC INDUSTRY – COMMUNITY CHOICE ENERGY

Bill Sponsor: Senators Beidle, Augustine, Elfreth, Feldman, Kagan, Lam, Lee, and Rosapepe

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

Person Submitting:

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0315 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive Movement.

Caucus members consistently support legislation designed to protect, and improve, air and water quality, and legislation that recognizes the status quo for energy production no longer meets our needs – climate change is upon us. Inasmuch as SB0315 promotes renewable energy, it satisfies these environmental priorities. The bill also shows potential for lowering energy costs for many customers, by giving county and local governments the ability to aggregate larger pools, and concomitantly negotiate for the same savings high demand (bulk) customers enjoy.

Evidence shows low-income households pursuing lower energy costs have taken a huge hit from bad actors in the third-party supply industry. SB0315 can reverse that damage, and in doing so not only encourage but enable those same households to participate in supporting renewable energy sources. It may be there is an as yet unrecognized, deep, reservoir of interest in renewable energy whose light the practicalities of life have hitherto kept hidden under a bushel.

SB0315 requires no subsidy, although it is certainly arguable that aggregation would be worthy of subsidy for its economic justice benefits alone, not to mention its potential environmental benefits. However, the bill leaves these judgments entirely up to customers, with an opt-out provision. The caucus anticipates that a majority of customers will find county and local aggregation plans a good fit, both economically and with an eye toward stewardship of the Earth.

The Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.