



Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Mary Beth Tung, Director

**TO:** Members, House Economic Matters Committee  
**FROM:** Mary Beth Tung – Director, MEA  
**SUBJECT:** HB0556 - Public Service Commission - Virtual Public Hearings  
**DATE:** January 29, 2021

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### **MEA POSITION: FWA**

House Bill 556 will allow the Public Service Commission (“PSC” or “Commission”) to hold certain hearings virtually, rather than in-person.

The PSC, like all State agencies, has responded admirably to the epidemic inasmuch that they have adapted the working environment to be majority or completely virtual. The Commission has been conducting hearings and workgroup meetings virtually for some time, and this has served as proof of concept for continued use of these technologies. The bill avoids overreach by allowing the Commission needed flexibility in choosing either in-person or virtual hearings in the future.

MEA would add that in this period of transition to a virtual working environment, the PSC has also been receiving all filings in a virtual manner, whereas in the past several physical copies were required. This has helped streamline the filing process, and reduced paper waste. MEA is offering amendments to make this practice a permanent fixture of PSC procedure.

For these reasons, MEA urges a **favorable report as amended**.

#### *Proposed Amendments*

On page 1 line 12, after “Section” insert “3-301”.

On page 1, after line 17, insert:

“3-301.”

**(D) SHALL ACCEPT ELECTRONIC AND PAPER FILINGS, BUT MAY NOT REQUIRE PAPER FILINGS EXCEPT WHERE WET SIGNATURES ARE BOTH NECESSARY AND OTHERWISE REQUIRED BY LAW.**”.