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The Maryland House of Delegates

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Testimony in Support of House Bill 1327 – Public Utilities – Transitional and Default Electric Service – Implementation

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of **House Bill 1327 – Public Utilities – Transitional and Default Electric Service – Implementation.**

House Bill 1327 aims to establish a fully competitive retail electric market, a process that was begun in 1999 with the General Assembly's enactment of deregulation. This measure would assure that all retail electricity customers have adequate, safe, and efficient access to electric service. By accelerating Maryland's Renewable Portfolio Standards in the near term, House Bill 1327 would also increase the amount of clean energy available to retail customers. The legislation also creates a Customer Choice Clean Energy Fund to support and assist in the deployment of clean energy resources by and for low to moderate income residential and small commercial customers, and help deliver the jobs, economic development, and other benefits of a fully competitive market. The Public Service Commission would administer the Fund.

To facilitate the transition of customers to qualified electric generation suppliers, House Bill 1327 establishes a competitive assignment process. The bill also contains customer education and consumer protection components, including requiring electric distribution companies to provide customers notice of the competitive assignment process, the nature of their transitional electricity product and right to switch, and their options preceding and following the assignment. It lays out a transition process for new or moving customers, requires consolidated billing, authorizes the Public Service Commission to require periodic supplier license renewals and posting of a bond or similar security and also empowers the PSC to promulgate a consumer bill of rights and create a supplier report card. Importantly, it prohibits electricity suppliers from door-to-door solicitation of residential customers and requires suppliers to offer at least one low-income customer assistance program.

House Bill 1327 advances the goals of our decades long march toward a truly competitive retail electric market. I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this measure and respectfully request a favorable report.