

Committee: House Economic Matters

Legislation: SB 0256/HB 0031 Establishing the Resiliency Hub Grant Program in the Maryland Energy Administration; requiring the Administration to establish certain procedures and criteria for the Program; establishing the Resiliency Hub Grant Program Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; requiring interest earnings of the Resiliency Hub Grant Program Fund to be credited to the Resiliency Hub Grant Program Fund; requiring that certain fines and penalties be credited to the Resiliency Hub Grant Program Fund rather than the General Fund of the State; etc.

Organization: Environmental Justice Ministry, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 3, 2022

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

The Resiliency Hub Grant Program (SB 0256/HB 0031) is essential to Marylanders' equity promise in the enduring Climate Justice crisis. The Environmental Justice Ministry of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church strongly supports HB 0031. As a faith community, the second principle of Unitarian Universalism holds "justice, equity and compassion in human relations" which is amplified by this bill. The Resilience Hub Grant Program will develop resiliency hubs that serve low and moderate income households at no cost to the households for the purpose of providing electricity to meet community needs during extended grid outages including:

1. Emergency heating and cooling
2. Refrigeration of temperature-sensitive medications
3. Outlets or other plug power options for charging cell phone and computer batteries
4. Ventilation and emergency lighting.

A "resiliency hub" is defined as location where solar photovoltaic and battery energy storage are design to provide electricity. "Low income" means a household with an annual adjusted gross income at or below 175% of the federal poverty level. "Moderate-income" means a household with an annual adjusted gross income at or below 80% of the local median income as specified.

Grants will be issued and regulations adopted by MEA in administering these programs. Businesses, non profits, units of State government, and local governments will be eligible for the grants. The bill establishes the RHGP fund as a special non lapsing fund administered by MEA. The HUBS exist for at least 10 years and the grant recipients must adhere in writing to strict labor and pay regulations.

Please vote favorably for this important equity legislation.

Nanci Wilkinson
Environmental Justice Ministry Team
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church