



TO: Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
FROM: Mary Beth Tung – Director, MEA
SUBJECT: SB 269 (HB 375) - Open Meetings Act - Application and Enhanced Requirements (Maryland State Agency Transparency Act of 2022)
DATE: February 15, 2022

MEA POSITION: FAV

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) supports this legislation that will add **transparency and accountability** to the operations of several state entities, including the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), which has received and continues to receive significant funding and support from the state.

MCEC was originally intended to be a self-sufficient and sustainable quasi-governmental organization, being statutorily required to develop a plan for self-sufficiency. However, MCEC has been unable or unwilling to achieve self-sufficiency over its lifetime. Rather, MCEC has often testified in support of legislation to increase state financial support for the entity.

From FY09-15, MCEC received loans from MEA totaling \$1.3 million. Those loans were not repaid, but rather expunged in FY18 per statute passed in 2017. From FY16-20, MEA has provided additional grants and statutory transfers of more than \$3 million to MCEC. Following the scheduled FY22 transfer, MCEC will have received \$10 million or more in transfers from MEA; funds that would have otherwise supported MEA's bevy of clean and renewable energy programs, greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts, and support low-to-moderate income energy efficiency and bill payment assistance.

Under HB 419 (2021), MCEC is now guaranteed a continuous, permanent stream of state funding via MEA, and it is appropriate to require additional transparency and accountability measures due to this fact. MCEC already hosts and records its board meetings via zoom, so adherence with the Open Meetings Act should create little to no administrative or financial burden for the organization.

MEA kindly asks the committee to issue a **favorable report**.