



SB 959 – Distributed Renewable Integration and Vehicle Electrification (DRIVE) Act

Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Nicholas Bibby, Maryland State Lead, Advanced Energy United

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Mr. Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee:

**Advanced Energy United ('United') is writing in support of Senate Bill 959, the Distributed Renewable Integration and Vehicle Electrification (DRIVE) Act. This legislation is crucial for Maryland's transition to electrified transportation and increased grid reliability.**

United is a national business association, dedicated to educating and advocating for policies that empower our member companies to lead the transition towards a cleaner, reliable, and affordable energy economy. We represent over 100 businesses working across the energy sector, including large-scale and distributed renewables, geothermal, energy storage, energy efficiency and demand response providers, transmission developers, electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers, and charging infrastructure providers.

#### **Advancements in EV and Grid Integration**

The DRIVE Act represents a critical, forward-thinking strategy for energy management and grid preparedness. By requiring the Public Service Commission (PSC) to implement a default time-of-use (TOU) tariff transition plan, the legislation facilitates energy consumption during off-peak hours, reducing strain on the grid and lowering costs for customers.

The requirement for the PSC to adopt expedited processes for interconnecting bidirectional EV systems to the electric grid is essential for Maryland's energy future. These provisions will pave the way for EVs to not only draw energy from the grid, but also supply energy back to the grid, turning these vehicles into mobile energy storage units. Streamlining the interconnection process for this technology will encourage wider adoption of EVs and is critical for enhancing grid resilience and flexibility, especially as EV adoption rates increase. These provisions also

promote a smoother integration of distributed energy resources (DERs), including EVs, thereby enhancing the grid's stability and resilience.

Moreover, the DRIVE Act offers benefits to Maryland businesses, particularly through the establishment of pilot programs and temporary tariffs to compensate owners and aggregators of DERs. By providing reasonable compensation on a pay-for-performance basis, the bill incentivizes businesses to develop and deploy technologies that contribute to grid support and efficiency.

### **Proposed Amendments**

Advanced Energy United also advocates for the inclusion of amendment language that would mandate the use of flexible interconnection agreements and automated load management as utility offerings for customers. These additions will ensure that the transition to a more renewable and EV-friendly grid is not only smooth but also adaptable to future technological advancements and consumer needs.

**Flexible Interconnection Agreements:** These agreements are pivotal as they allow customers to connect DERs, such as bidirectional EV systems, to the grid in a cost-effective and expedient way. Traditional interconnection processes can be cumbersome and expensive, posing significant barriers to the integration of renewable energy resources and the adoption of EVs. These agreements also facilitate a more dynamic interaction between DERs and the grid, enhancing grid stability and enabling a more responsive energy supply system.

**Automated Load Management:** This technology is crucial for managing the complexities associated with the increasing number of DERs and controllable devices connected to the grid. ALM systems enable real-time balancing of supply and demand, reducing the risk of grid overloads, and reducing the need for costly infrastructure upgrades.

For these reasons, United strongly supports SB 959. We respectfully request a favorable vote, with friendly amendments, from this Committee.

