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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

March 1, 2024

Chair Brian J. Feldman
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: **SB 570 – Favorable - Retail Choice Customer Education and Protection Fund - Purposes and Uses**

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

Section 7-310 of the Public Utilities Article provides the Public Service Commission (PSC) with the financial resources to educate electric and gas customers of the State of Maryland about their ability to choose the supplier of those commodities. With changes in the energy retail supply market in Maryland, the PSC seeks to expand the use of those resources to educate customers not only on the ability to choose an electric and gas supplier, but also energy choices that help move the State closer to the achievement of our climate goals. The Public Service Commission requests a favorable vote on SB 570.

When an energy retail supplier has been found in violation of Maryland statute and assessed civil penalties by the Public Service Commission, those penalties are deposited in the Retail Choice Customer Education and Protection Fund. The current Fund has been previously used to stand up and maintain the State's two retail choice websites that educate Marylanders on their options for energy retail supply contracts. In addition, the PSC uses monies from the Fund to prepare and distribute materials at outreach events, including Power in the Park and Power Hour events with legislators. With the enactment of legislation that limits the participation of recipients of energy assistance in the retail energy market, the PSC would like to expand the scope of our outreach and education, especially for attendees at events that fall into that category. The PSC is in the process of developing a large state-wide media campaign that will, with the enactment of this bill, encompass not only information on energy retail choice, but information regarding choices all Marylanders can make to decrease their greenhouse gas emissions footprint and save money.

Further, SB 918 will allow the Public Service Commission to fully implement a Supplier Education Program as required in Public Utilities Article § 7-311. This Education program will add another tool in the toolbox of the PSC to ensure that energy retail suppliers operating in the

State of Maryland are fully aware of the rules and regulations that direct their activities in the State.

With the enactment of SB 918, the Public Service Commission will be able to add to the activities already being undertaken to educate Marylanders on their choices in energy and energy consumption. I request a favorable report on SB 918. Please direct any questions to Christina Ochoa, Director of Legislative Affairs, at christina.ochoa1@maryland.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frederick H. Hoover". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F'.

Frederick H. Hoover, Chair
Maryland Public Service Commission