



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SB 726 – MARYLAND CLEAN ENERGY CENTER – CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY FUNDING

POSITION: SUPPORT

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) and the national League support energy policies that emphasize predominant reliance on renewable energy resources. We support the action of government to encourage the use of renewable resources and energy conservation through funding for research and development, financial incentives, rate-setting policies and mandatory standards.

The state of Maryland must act creatively and strategically if we are to continue a coherent strategy to slow or stop Maryland's contribution to emissions of carbon, methane and nitrous oxide from fossil fuels into the Earth's atmosphere.

The provisions of SB 726 that enhance the ability of The Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) to be the *Green Bank* and promote economic development and jobs in the Maryland clean energy industry sector, are important ways to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy and benefit the economy of the state.

We support establishing the Clean Energy Technology Financing Fund that is targeted at providing low-cost capital financing with substantial private sector participation. The Fund can evaluate and provide financing for qualified energy projects and facilitate long-term energy purchasing by governmental, private and non-profit entities.

Small to mid-sized business projects, low-to-moderate income residential projects, small municipal projects and emerging technologies boosted by the Fund will contribute to strengthening the economy of the state. Loans provided by the Green Bank would be paid back with interest thus providing more seed money for dynamic new projects in Maryland.

The Clean Energy Technology Financing Fund would be launched with a \$30 million public investment fund meant to provide funds to attract private sector capital into the market. Initial funding would come from the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Other funds can come from Federal programs, grants or private contributions and repayment of loans. Oversight by a Credit Investment Advisory Committee will strengthen the operation of the Fund.

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The state of Maryland is reaching a crisis point. Over 3,000 miles of tidal shoreline make Maryland one of the most vulnerable states in the nation when it comes to sea level rise. The Annapolis and Baltimore waterfronts and Ocean City face frequent flooding today. The costs of mitigation and adaptation exceed the costs of new investment in non-carbon emitting sources of energy.

Creation of the Clean Energy Technology Financing Fund has the potential to accelerate the development of a new clean energy industry while developing solutions to serious threats to the health, jobs and economy of Maryland presented by a warming climate. LWVMD urges support of SB 726.