



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE

HB 1106 – MARYLAND CLEAN ENERGY JOBS ACT

POSITION: SUPPORT

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DATE: MARCH 3, 2016

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. LWVMD also has concern for low-income individuals when energy policies bear unduly on the poor and we support special attention to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of urban communities.

By increasing the renewable energy standard in Maryland to 25 percent by 2020, HB 1106 will enhance our ability to fight carbon emissions and directly benefit the climate, the health and the economy of our state.

Increasing the amount of renewable energy like solar and wind will help us move away from dirty fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas that have given us some of the worst ground-level ozone pollution in the eastern U.S. Improved air quality will reduce premature deaths and hospitalizations from asthma and other respiratory illnesses, saving lives and money. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that illness caused by polluting energy sources costs Maryland households an average of \$73 per month. Increasing renewable energy will provide more choice for Maryland consumers and has real potential to lower health care costs and improve quality of life.

Maryland's solar industry already includes more than 170 companies and over 4,300 jobs today. The current "solar carve-out" within the renewable portfolio is one of the key drivers of economic benefit and jobs in the state of Maryland and increasing it could support thousands of new jobs each year. Growth from wind power in the region can stimulate new, well-paying manufacturing and construction jobs.

The Clean Energy Jobs Act also includes a funding source for workforce development to train Marylanders for careers through a Clean Energy Workforce Account in The Maryland Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) program. Another benefit is the Clean Energy Development Fund that will help minority and women-owned business enter and grow with in the clean energy economy in Maryland, again from existing sources.

Passage of HB 1106 has great potential to lower carbon emissions fulfilling the unanimous goal of the Maryland Climate Change Commission of a 40 percent reduction in carbon emissions below 2006 levels by 2030. At the same time, HB 1106 can help lower health care costs by improving air quality and also create new, well-paying careers and jobs through provisions to grow a workforce for the future and enhance the economic strength of Maryland.

We respectfully urge a favorable report by the Committee on HB 1106, the Maryland Clean Energy Jobs Act.