

# HB169

## Supporting Energy Efficiency for Low-Income Marylanders

### Low-Income Marylanders Face High Energy Burdens.

**Maryland's low-income residents pay 550% more as a portion of income for energy** than most Marylanders.

The majority of these households (55%) are Black, Hispanic, or Asian families. Money spent on high utility bills is money that cannot be used for other daily necessities, from school supplies to medical bills.

From rural Maryland to Baltimore City, these residents often endure broken HVAC systems, drafty windows, and unreliable electrical systems, all of which contribute to high energy bills and unhealthy living conditions.

Marylanders can't afford to wait. Residents in low-income homes already endure dangerous heat and cold extremes in poorly insulated homes such as one Baltimore City child's bedroom where the heat index reached 113 degrees in July 2019.<sup>1</sup>

**Maryland lags behind other states** in helping low-income residents achieve energy savings and lower energy costs. Nationally, low-income households dedicate 8% of their annual incomes to energy costs, while Maryland's low-income households pay 13%.

Maryland has no goal or agency accountable for maximizing energy efficiency in the low-income households most in need of energy savings when "using energy more efficiently is one of the fastest, most cost-effective ways" to

lower utility bills and stabilize electricity prices for vulnerable households.<sup>2</sup>

### **This Bill:**

- ✓ Sets a standard of 1% annual energy savings for low-income households (at or below 80% of the area median income).
- ✓ Coordinates and consolidates a range of federal and state funding sources, including the Inflation Reduction Act's new funding for building retrofits<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ Increases EmPOWER funding for the Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development's Multifamily Energy Efficiency & Housing Affordability (MEEHA) program and the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP)
- ✓ Enables state-funded home energy performance audits in qualified low-income homes and funds necessary energy efficiency improvements such as new insulation, better windows, EnergyStar® appliances, LED light bulbs and more.
- ✓ creates Green and Healthy Task Force
- ✓ **Supports greater energy equity for low-income Marylanders**

<sup>2</sup><https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/local-energy-efficiency-benefits-and-opportunities>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/the-inflation-reduction-act-a-historic-investment-in-climate-friendly-and-healthy-housing/>

<sup>1</sup><https://cnsmaryland.org/interactives/summer-2019/code-red/neighborhood-heat-inequality.html>

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