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Maryland General Assembly Passes Community Choice Energy Pilot Program Enabling Montgomery County Residents More Affordable and Equitable Access to Renewable Energy

1 message

Press Release - Montgomery County, MD <mcg-pio@public.govdelivery.com>

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News Releases

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND



For Immediate Release: Thursday, April 15, 2021

Maryland General Assembly Passes Community Choice Energy Pilot Program Enabling Montgomery County Residents More Affordable and Equitable Access to Renewable Energy

The Maryland General Assembly has passed House Bill 768—*Montgomery County – Community Choice Energy – Pilot Program*—that will give Montgomery County the authority to implement an opt-out Community Choice Energy (CCE) program. The bill will provide an opportunity for the County to purchase energy on behalf of residential and small commercial electricity customers. Maryland is only the ninth state in the nation to pass CCE legislation.

CCE will enable the County to offer more renewable energy supply to customers than is currently provided by the three electric utilities serving the County. At the same time, it has the potential to deliver price stability and cost savings to residents and small businesses. Opt-out CCE is one of the actions identified in the County's Draft Climate Action Plan as a tool to significantly reduce the County's electricity-related emissions.

"I want to thank the General Assembly for passing this important legislation and give a special thanks to Delegate Lorig Charkoudian and Senator Brian Feldman for their leadership and to all of the advocates, including Food and Water Watch," said Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. "CCE offers an important tool for combating climate change and will assist Montgomery County achieve a healthier and more sustainable environment for our residents. We are addressing the challenge of climate change with a great sense of urgency. The passage of this legislation is very helpful."

The CCE program allows the County to aggregate the electric loads of residents and small businesses in order to negotiate more favorable terms with an electricity supplier or enable the direct purchase of power from a renewable generation source. An opt-out CCE program would replace the basic 'standard offer service' for electricity supply offered by the utilities operating in the County. Residents and business would need to opt-out if they did not want to participate in the CCE. Customers already receiving electricity supply from third-party electricity suppliers would remain in their current service.

As stipulated in the bill, the County may not establish a CCE earlier than April 2023. Over the next two years, the County will develop an implementation plan and also will participate in a Public Service Commission workgroup that will develop the regulatory framework for the CCE pilot.

The County Council also must pass local authorizing legislation for the CCE and the County will conduct extensive outreach during the development of the CCE to ensure that it is informed by community values and that special attention is given to the needs to vulnerable communities.

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