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25 Local and National Organizations Urge Maryland Lawmakers to Pass Energy Efficiency Law and Save Ratepayers Money

“EmPOWER Maryland” Initiative provides plan to reduce energy bills, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and avoid need for expensive new power plants

ANNAPOLIS, Md., March 13, 2008—With Maryland facing a looming energy crisis complete with rolling blackouts as early as 2011 – just three years away – 25 organizations from the state and across the country today called on Maryland legislators to increase the state’s energy efficiency as a way to reduce energy usage and costs while still meeting consumers’ needs (EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Initiative, HB 374/SB 205).

The EmPOWER Initiative, now pending in the Maryland Legislature with Gov. Martin O’Malley’s support, would cut energy waste and save consumers money, said Reid Detchon, Executive Director of the Energy Future Coalition. “With this one step we can address rising electric bills, protect our future from shrinking energy supplies and reduce global warming pollution.”

Right now, Maryland imports 30 percent of its power from neighboring states. Transmission lines across the state are now almost at capacity during peak daylight hours. If demand increases over the next few years, PJM Interconnection estimates that Maryland will not be able to import enough energy to keep the lights on, and could face rolling blackouts on *any* hot summer day as soon as 2011.

“This legislation would require utilities to invest in our cheapest, cleanest and quickest source of energy – efficiency,” said Reid Detchon. The Energy Future Coalition is one of the 25 organizations supporting the EmPOWER Initiative. “Increasing energy efficiency under the EmPOWER Initiative means we can avoid building costly new power plants and huge transmission lines that will increase our electric bills and make our carbon footprint bigger. Instead, we’ll be creating new Maryland businesses and thousands of jobs.”

With a low-lying coastline as long as California’s, Maryland is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Increasing energy efficiency under the EmPOWER Initiative would reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, which would help protect the state from the worst impacts of global warming.

Organizations supporting the EmPOWER Initiative are:

- American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy
- Alliance to Save Energy
- Baltimore Green Construction
- Baltimore Landmark Homes
- Calvert Group, Ltd.
- Center for American Progress
- Ceres
- Chesapeake Sustainable Business Alliance
- City Life Realty
- Consumer Federation of America
- Energy Future Coalition
- Environment Maryland
- Gabrielli Design Studio
- Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light
- Green Building Institute, Jessup MD
- Hannon Armstrong
- Lutheran Office on Public Policy in Maryland
- Maryland Environmental Service
- Maryland League of Conservation Voters
- Maryland Public Interest Research Group
- National Association of Energy Service Companies
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Sierra Club - Maryland Chapter
- Sullivan & Worcester LLP
- United States Green Building Council - Baltimore Chapter

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About the Energy Future Coalition

The Energy Future Coalition is a broad-based, nonpartisan alliance that seeks to bridge the differences among business, labor, and environmental groups and identify energy policy options with broad political support. The coalition aims to bring about changes in U.S. energy policy to address the economic, security and environmental challenges related to the production and use of fossil fuels with a compelling new vision of the economic opportunities that will be created by the transition to a new energy economy.