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**HB 1186:** Public Service Companies – Annual Report on Votes Cast at Meetings of Regional Transmission Organizations

**Committee:** House Economic Matters

**Position:** Opposed

Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO), a member-owned electric cooperative based in Hughesville that provides electricity to more than 170,000 member accounts in Charles, St. Mary's, Calvert and southern Prince George's County, opposes House Bill 1186. The bill requires each public service company that is a member of a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) to provide to the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) an annual report on votes cast by the public service company at a meeting of the regional transmission organization. The bill also requires the public service company to include a description of how each vote cast is in the interest of the public.

An RTO is an organization formed at the approval of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and has exclusive responsibility for grid operations, short-term and long-term reliability and transmission service within a region. SMECO is a member of the PJM Interconnection which comprises 13 states and the District of Columbia.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, SMECO is an advocate of transparency when it comes to policy decisions, rate adjustments, infrastructure improvements and other utility operations. That said, the PJM stakeholder process has a lot of lower level, working and stakeholder groups that do not necessarily take "votes" but there are polls and discussions on complex topics that lead to consensus and collaboration. To try and capture all these actions and compile them into a list with justification would be an additional requirement that we do not believe is necessary. The bill is also silent on what the PSC would do with the information once it is filed, considering it does not have jurisdiction over the regional transmission grid.

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For more information, contact: Tom Dennison, SMECO

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SMECO is concerned that HB 1186 could stifle debate and innovation at PJM when lower level committees are developing policies and hashing out recommendations to move forward. At the PJM members Committee, which is the senior most standing committee and through with every major vote is taken, votes are recorded by company and are publicly available and published by PJM. We believe the current level of transparency with PJM votes is sufficient. For that and the other reasons explained above, SMECO requests an unfavorable report on HB 1186.

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