

The Energy Resilience and Efficiency Working Group

Member Biographies (as of August 6, 2024)

Name: The Honorable Kathryn Fry Hester

Organization: Maryland State Senate

Title: Maryland State Senator, Democrat, District 9, Howard County and Montgomery County

Seat: A member of the State Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate

Personal Background: Senator Katie Fry Hester has represented Maryland's 9th district since 2019 and serves as the Deputy Majority Whip. She is the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology and Biotechnology, as well as a member of the Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee, Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics, and Women Legislators of Maryland. Additionally, she is a member of the Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment, and its subcommittees on energy and environment. In addition to her work in the Senate, Senator Hester is a Maryland First Responder and volunteers with the Wisp Ski patrol.

Organizational Background: The Maryland State Senate is the upper house of the General Assembly, the state legislature of the U.S. state of Maryland. There are 47 senators, one from each of Maryland's legislative districts. The Senate Chamber is in the Maryland State House on State Circle in Annapolis.

Name: The Honorable Lorig Charkoudian

Organization: Maryland House of Delegates

Title: Maryland State Delegate, Democrat, District 20, Montgomery County

Seat: A member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House

Personal Background: Lorig Charkoudian is a Maryland State Delegate representing the 20th District, along with Del. Moon and Del. Wilkins. She assumed office in 2019, and has since been serving on the Economic Matters Committee. Del. Charkoudian also serves on the Public Utilities Subcommittee. In addition to her work in the House of Delegates, Del. Charkoudian participates annually in a fundraising campaign for mediation programs between families and prisoners.

Organizational Background: The Maryland House of Delegates is the lower house of the legislature of the U.S. state of Maryland. It consists of 141 delegates elected from 47 districts. The House of Delegates Chamber is in the Maryland State House on State Circle in Annapolis.

Name: Andrew Place

Organization: Maryland Department of the Environment

Title: Senior Advisor

Seat: The MDE Secretary, or the Secretary's designee (designee)

Personal Background: Andrew Place is a senior advisor at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Place served on Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission for five years preceding the start of his role at MDE. He served as vice chairman of the commission from 2015 to 2018. Prior to his service on the commission, Place served as the Corporate Director for Energy and Environmental Policy at the EQT Corporation and also served as Deputy Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Place holds a B.S. in Economics from the University of Pittsburgh and a M.P.P. in Public Policy and Management from Carnegie Mellon University, where he later worked as an adjunct professor.

Organizational Background: The mission of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is to protect and restore the environment for the health and well-being of all Marylanders. The vision of the agency is to support healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities and ecosystems in Maryland.

Name: Jeff Shaw

Organization: Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO)

Title: Vice President of Distributed Energy and Sustainability

Seat: Three representatives of the energy transmission infrastructure industry, selected by the Public Service Commission

Personal Background: Jeff Shaw serves as Vice President of Distributed Energy and Sustainability for Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative.

Organization Background: SMECO is an electric distribution cooperative, serving approximately 161,000 customers in southern Maryland. As a nonprofit cooperative, it passes its costs to customers without any markup or profit.

Name: Landon Fahrig, Esq.

Organization: Maryland Energy Administration

Title: Assistant Division Director for Energy Policy

Seat: The Director of the Maryland Energy Administration, or the Director's designee (designee)

Personal Background: Landon Fahrig is the Assistant Division Director for Energy Policy at the Maryland Energy Administration, concentrating in legislative affairs. Landon works with industry professionals, individuals, and interested stakeholders to promote affordable, reliable, and cleaner energy for the benefit of all Marylanders. Prior to working at MEA, Landon was Research Director for a United States Senate campaign and a Policy Analyst at the General Assembly of Maryland. Landon received his B.A. in Political Science from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. He received his Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

Organization Background: The mission of the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) is to promote clean, affordable, reliable energy and energy-related greenhouse gas emission reductions to benefit Marylanders in a just and equitable manner.

Name: Mark Zucca

Organization: Potomac Edison

Title: Regulatory Affairs Advisor

Seat: Three representatives of the energy transmission infrastructure industry, selected by the Public Service Commission

Personal Background: Mark Zucca has worked for Potomac Edison's parent company FirstEnergy for the previous 15 years, including positions in transmission and distribution engineering, utility operations, and external affairs. Zucca holds a BSEE in Electrical Engineering from The Pennsylvania State University and is a registered Professional Engineer in the state of Maryland.

Organizational Background: Potomac Edison is an electric transmission and distribution utility in western Maryland. Potomac Edison is a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp.

Name: Maurice Simpson, Jr.

Organization: Constellation Energy Corporation

Title: Senior Manager of State and Regulatory Affairs

Seat: Three representatives of the nuclear energy industry, selected by the Director of the Maryland Energy Administration

Personal Background: Maurice Simpson, Jr. was born and raised in Maryland. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Clark Atlanta University, and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Baltimore. Prior to joining Constellation, Maurice spent over 7 years in public service as an aide to the Prince George's County Council. Aside from his work at Constellation, Maurice serves on the board of Ardmore

Enterprises, a local non-profit that empowers people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He also is an active member of the Prince George's County NAACP and First Baptist Church of Glenarden.

Organizational Background: Constellation Energy is the largest producer of carbon-free electricity in the country. It owns and operates the largest fleet of nuclear power plants, including Calvert Cliffs in Lusby, MD.

Name: Nancy Sopko

Organization: U.S. Wind

Title: Senior Director of External Affairs

Seat: Three representatives of the energy transmission infrastructure industry, selected by the Public Service Commission

Personal Background: Nancy Sopko, as Senior Director of External Affairs for U.S. Wind, leads the company's government and public affairs initiatives (including stakeholder outreach). Prior to joining U.S. Wind, Nancy served as Executive Director at the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind where she led the engagement with the commercial fishing industry.

Organizational Background: Founded in 2011, U.S. Wind leads Maryland's offshore wind development efforts. Since 2014, it has been involved in one of the largest offshore wind farm projects in the country.

Name: Christine Csizmadia

Organization: Nuclear Energy Institute

Title: Senior Manager for State Outreach

Seat: Three representatives of the nuclear energy industry, selected by the Director of the Maryland Energy Administration

Personal Background: Christine Csizmadia has been with the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) for over nine years. During her tenure, she has helped develop many state, local, and grassroots programs, notably launching the Nuclear Advocacy Network. Christine also serves as a member of NEI's state and local government affairs team, where she manages coalition building, grassroots mobilization, and local elected official outreach and education.

Organizational Background: NEI's mission is to promote the use and growth of nuclear energy through efficient operations and effective policy. NEI accomplishes this by providing a unified industry voice before Congress, the executive branch, state and local legislatures, and federal regulators, as well as international organizations and venues, on key policy issues.

Name: Carol Lane

Organization: X-Energy

Title: Vice President of Governmental Affairs

Seat: Three representatives of the nuclear energy industry, selected by the Director of the Maryland Energy Administration

Personal Background: Carol Lane leads government relations for X-Energy. With over 20 years of experience in government and private sector, she has worked in the energy, national security, and aerospace sectors. Carol is a graduate of George Washington University, and currently serves as the president of the American Astronautical Society.

Organizational Background: X-Energy is a private nuclear reactor and fuel design engineering company. Their mission is to change the world through innovative and implementable energy solutions; and to be the world's leader in development of High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactors and the Fuel to supply to those reactors.