



Town of Washington Grove
300 Grove Avenue
P.O. Box 216
Washington Grove, MD 20880
301-926-2256

February 11, 2022

The Maryland Senate Finance Committee
The Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
Senate Bill 376 (Lee)
House Bill 1083 (Carr)

Re: I'm writing to urge you act favorably and pass *The County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act* to strengthen the option for municipalities in Maryland to own their own streetlight fixtures.

The Town of Washington Grove (TWG) is a small municipality in Montgomery County, Maryland. The Town is on the National Register of Historic Places, and its lighting is included as a Historic Associated Feature in the National Register Historic District Listing.

In cooperation with Pepco, TWG has done several energy-efficient conversions of our streetlights that have helped reduce our lighting costs while improving service. TWG does not own our streetlight fixtures and poles; they are currently owned by Pepco. Had Pepco's recent Multi-Year Plan Rate Case 9655 been successful, it is likely that both our historic lighting and the savings we have managed to develop over the years would have been in jeopardy. Pepco's Multi Year Plan Case 9655 eliminated the option for a municipality to own its streetlight fixtures unless the fixtures were already LED.

There may be significant economic advantages for a municipality to own its own streetlights. For most municipalities in the United States their highest utility cost is their streetlights. And by the numbers, the municipalities around the USA who have opted to purchase their own streetlights have saved a lot of money in the process!

Additionally, these municipalities have been able to improve their streetlight fixture maintenance process by now having the option of hiring certified technicians for their maintenance.

Another critical benefit of owning your own streetlights is the ability to control the aesthetics of the lighting in your communities. You can design and evolve your streetlights to meet the needs of your municipality.

Several New England states have moved towards allowing communities the right to purchase their streetlights from their local utility. In Massachusetts this option was passed in 1998 and since that time nearly 120 communities have purchased their lights, including the Cities of Boston, Fall River, New Bedford, and some communities as small as Royalston with its 70 lights. They are experiencing substantial savings.

TWG has been working with the consultant who was responsible for the legislation in Massachusetts and assisted both Maine and Rhode Island with similar legislation. He has also worked with over 120 communities assisting them through the streetlight acquisition process. By experience, it seems that most communities could benefit from the right to own their lights. They can also realize a substantial improvement in street lighting service by employing maintenance contracts with penalties for failure to meet performance standards.

Communities benefit from being able to select the kind of lighting they want and being billed based on energy usage. Ownership will provide communities the flexibility to make those choices.

I am not suggesting that this is an easy task or undertaking for any municipality. In fact, despite the Maryland law enacted in 2007 that gave Maryland municipalities the right to own their streetlights, Pepco has been able to circumvent the intent of that legislation with process and delays. In our region, Washington D.C. is the only jurisdiction that has been successful in purchasing their overhead streetlights from Pepco.

There needs to a meaningful path to municipal ownership for those who want the option of owning and maintaining streetlights of their own choosing. With the proposed new legislation, the opportunities for Maryland Municipalities to engage in fair negotiations for the ownership of their streetlight fixtures would be strengthened.

I speak for the Town of Washington Grove and its residents that we support passage of *The County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act* - Senate Bill 376 (Lee) House Bill 1083 (Carr).

Thank you for supporting this legislation!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John G. Compton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

John G. Compton
Mayor, Town of Washington Grove