

Studying Electrification - Climate Solutions Now (SB528)

If we are going to study electrification, let's do it right!

New provisions in SB528 direct the Public Service Commission (PSC) to study the electric grid infrastructure throughout the state to determine if it is capable of accommodating the additional load of building electrification. As written, the bill gives a lot of deference to utilities without any assurances of stakeholder engagement, data transparency, or guidelines to ensure accurate and legitimate results.

The solution: Amendments need to be made to SB528 to ensure that the PSC study is done accurately, efficiently, and with broad electrification in mind.

Accuracy and legitimacy

Currently, SB528 requires the PSC to conduct this study with information that the gas and electric companies provide. The bill does not specify how the study will be conducted, what information the companies must share, how the information will be verified, or what data sharing and transparency requirements will exist.

The solution: The bill should explicitly outline the assumptions used for the study and outline data sharing agreements with the utility companies.

Economy-wide electrification

The study is currently framed as answering the question “Can the grid accommodate building electrification?” However, we know that to reach our emission reduction goals, we must electrify across our economy. A more helpful question to ask would be “What investments do we need to make to support economy-wide electrification?”

The solution: The bill should require the study to determine recommendations for specific electric grid infrastructure investments, including the implementation of distributed energy resources and increased energy efficiency. The bill should also evaluate electrification initiatives across the economy, such as electric vehicle deployment, as well as building electrification. This has been done in other states and jurisdictions to great success, [including in neighboring Washington, D.C.](#)¹

Efficiency and Timeliness

SB528 currently requires the PSC to report interim findings to the General Assembly by January 1, 2023, and provide a final report by December 1, 2023. Climate change demands urgent action and an expedited study is clearly doable if the General Assembly mandates it.

The solution: The PSC electrification report can and should be completed within 12 months, with a report deadline of June 1, 2023.

Electrification is the key to decarbonization and energy stability. If we are going to invest in a study to understand the grid's capacity to support electrification initiatives, we must do it right!

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¹ “An Assessment of Electrification Impacts on the Pepco DC System.” Prepared by The Brattle Group. 2021. At <https://www.brattle.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/An-Assessment-of-Electrification-Impacts-on-the-Pepco-DC-System.pdf>