



Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
SB 220: Gas Price Gouging Act
Position: Favorable

February 3, 2020

Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members, Senate Finance Committee

Honorable Chair Kelley and Members of the Committee:

MCRC is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances financial justice and economic inclusion for Maryland consumers through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 8,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

SB 220 requires service stations to post the highest gasoline price in a clear and legible manner, rather than the lowest price, as now required by current law.

With more than three million drivers on the road in Maryland, it's important for consumers to understand the cost of gas as they manage their budgets. Clarity and transparency are one of the fundamental pillars of consumer protection – consumers must know the full cost of the product, inclusive of taxes, fees, etc.

This is an important disclosure for service stations since many price their gas differently depending on pay options – gas is cheaper for those paying cash rather than credit card. Today, the lowest gas price is advertised, however, many consumers use debit or credit cards rather than carry cash. In other words, if consumers are purchasing gas based on price and are unaware that the lowest price is only when they use cash, they have asymmetric information and can't make the most informed decision. This legislation would provide appropriate disclosure so that the consumer can make an informed choice when they purchase gas.

For these reasons, we support SB 220 and urge a favorable report.

Best,
Marceline White
Executive Director