



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 950 – Natural Gas Generating Facilities – Authorization

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

HEARING DATE: March 6, 2025

SPONSORS: Senators West, Ready, Carozza, and Watson

POSITION: Favorable

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support of Senate Bill 950 (SB950)**, which provides a **strategic and necessary approach to Maryland’s energy future** by authorizing **the construction and operation of natural gas generating facilities** until the state meets **50% of its energy needs from renewable energy resources, including nuclear energy**. This bill is essential for **ensuring energy reliability, protecting Maryland’s conserved lands, reducing electricity costs, and creating thousands of high-paying jobs in our state**.

Ensuring Grid Reliability and Energy Security

Maryland currently **imports a significant portion of its electricity**, making us vulnerable to **supply disruptions, price volatility, and increased transmission expansion**. As we transition to renewable energy, **SB950 ensures that Maryland maintains a stable, reliable power supply** by allowing **in-state natural gas generation to continue until we reach 50% renewable energy**.

- **Natural gas provides a firm, dispatchable energy source** that can **fill the gaps** when solar and wind generation are unavailable.
- **Battery storage technology is improving but is not yet capable of fully replacing baseload power from natural gas**.
- Maryland’s reliance on out-of-state power exposes us to **transmission constraints, reliability risks, and higher costs**.

By increasing **in-state energy generation**, SB950 ensures that Maryland remains **energy-secure** and **reduces its dependence on costly electricity imports from neighboring states**.

Protecting Maryland’s Preserved and Conserved Land from Transmission Expansion

SB950 is not just about reliability—it is also critical for **protecting Maryland’s farmland, forests, and conserved lands from unnecessary transmission expansion**.



Maryland's increasing energy demand and reliance on imported electricity from PJM Interconnection puts us at risk of **more large-scale transmission projects**, which often require **eminent domain, threaten conservation easements, and disrupt rural communities**.

By ensuring **Maryland is resource adequate**—meaning we can **generate enough electricity within our borders to meet our own energy needs**—we reduce the pressure to **sacrifice more preserved land for unnecessary transmission infrastructure**.

- **Avoiding unnecessary transmission buildout** protects **lands preserved under the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), Rural Legacy Program, and private conservation easements**.
- **Keeping energy generation local** strengthens our state's **energy independence**, reducing reliance on out-of-state electricity markets that drive costly and land-consuming transmission expansion.
- **Reducing transmission expansion safeguards Maryland's rural communities and farms**, which are already under threat from urban sprawl and development pressures.

Job Growth and Economic Benefits for Maryland

SB950 will **boost Maryland's economy by creating thousands of high-paying jobs** in construction, engineering, operations, and maintenance. Expanding natural gas generation within Maryland will:

- **Create thousands of skilled construction jobs** in building and upgrading natural gas plants.
- **Support ongoing jobs in plant operations, maintenance, and related industries**, including supply chain manufacturing and skilled trades.
- **Generate significant tax revenue** for Maryland's local and state governments, supporting education, infrastructure, and community services.

The natural gas industry already contributes **billions of dollars to state and local economies** across the U.S., and allowing Maryland to generate more of its own electricity ensures that **these economic benefits stay within the state rather than being sent to neighboring states**.

Lowering Energy Costs for Maryland Families and Businesses

Maryland residents and businesses are struggling with **rising electricity bills**, in part due to **our dependence on expensive out-of-state energy imports**.



- **SB950 reduces the cost of importing electricity**, providing **immediate price relief** while we continue expanding renewables.
- In-state energy generation **helps stabilize energy prices**, protecting consumers from unpredictable price spikes due to regional supply constraints.
- More local generation also **increases competition in Maryland's energy market**, leading to more affordable rates for consumers.

A Responsible and Phased Transition to Renewable Energy

SB950 does not advocate for **indefinite reliance on natural gas**, but rather establishes a **clear and structured phase-out plan** that aligns with Maryland's progress toward its renewable energy goals.

- Once **50% of Maryland's electricity needs are met by renewables and nuclear energy**, the **Maryland Energy Administration (MEA)** will collaborate with **natural gas plant operators** to **gradually reduce natural gas production** at the same pace as renewable generation increases.
- This approach **avoids sudden energy price spikes** and **ensures a smooth, economically viable transition** for consumers and businesses alike.

Conclusion

SB950 is a **practical and balanced solution** that **protects Maryland's conserved lands, strengthens our energy security, creates thousands of high-paying jobs, and provides immediate relief from rising electricity costs.**

By making Maryland **resource adequate**, we ensure that **our state's farmlands, conservation easements, and rural communities are not sacrificed for unnecessary transmission expansion.** Energy policy should not come at the expense of Maryland's **agricultural heritage and protected landscapes.**

For these reasons, I **strongly urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB950.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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