

Testimony in Support of SB 950

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brenda Myers, and I am writing today to voice my support for Senate Bill 950 (SB 950). This legislation provides Maryland with a balanced and pragmatic approach to transitioning toward a clean energy future while ensuring energy reliability and economic stability. As our state works toward ambitious renewable energy goals, SB 950 ensures that we do not compromise the reliability of our electric grid or impose undue burdens on consumers and businesses.

Maryland policymakers face a critical challenge: how to meet our state's growing energy demands while advancing renewable energy goals. SB 950 offers a realistic solution by authorizing the construction and operation of natural gas power plants as a temporary measure until Maryland achieves 50% renewable energy generation, including nuclear power. This ensures that our transition to clean energy is not only ambitious but also practical and secure. SB 950 will do the following:

Ensuring Grid Reliability – Renewable energy sources like wind and solar are intermittent, and while energy storage technology is advancing, it is not yet capable of replacing the reliability of fossil fuel power plants. SB 950 allows natural gas plants to operate until Maryland reaches a 50% renewable energy threshold, preventing blackouts and energy shortages while our clean energy capacity expands.

Addressing Maryland's Energy Shortfall – Maryland has retired multiple coal plants in recent years and imports a significant portion of its electricity from out of state. With demand rising due to data center expansion and electrification initiatives, SB 950 ensures that Maryland maintains a reliable in-state power supply rather than relying on expensive and potentially less sustainable imported electricity.

A Managed and Responsible Transition – SB 950 does not promote indefinite fossil fuel use. Instead, it mandates a phased reduction of natural gas generation once Maryland reaches 50% renewable energy. The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) will work with natural gas plant operators to scale down fossil fuel production in direct proportion to the growth of clean energy sources.

Aligning Economic and Environmental Goals

Some opponents may argue that any expansion of natural gas infrastructure contradicts Maryland's climate commitments. However, SB 950 takes a middle-ground approach that ensures:

- **A gradual transition that does not jeopardize energy reliability.**
- **A structured and predictable decline of natural gas use.**
- **That Maryland's economy and residents are not burdened with unstable energy costs.**

By requiring a direct correlation between fossil fuel reduction and renewable energy expansion, SB 950 prevents economic disruptions while keeping Maryland on track to meet its long-term clean energy objectives.

SB 950 Fits into Maryland's Clean Energy Strategy

Maryland has set a target of achieving 100% clean electricity by 2045 under the Climate Solutions Now Act. SB 950 does not derail this goal—it strengthens it by ensuring that Maryland can reliably meet its energy needs during the transition.

The bill complements existing clean energy initiatives, including:

- Expanding offshore wind and solar energy projects.
- Modernizing the grid and improving battery storage capacity.
- Incentivizing energy efficiency and demand response programs.
- Supporting the potential expansion of nuclear power as a stable, carbon-free energy source.

Maryland's energy transition must be both ambitious and practical. SB 950 ensures that our state can continue advancing toward a clean energy future while safeguarding the reliability and affordability of our power supply. By permitting natural gas generation only until Maryland reaches 50% renewable energy, the bill establishes a clear, structured path for phasing out fossil fuels in a way that prioritizes grid stability and economic sustainability.

I urge this committee to support SB 950 as a responsible and necessary measure to secure Maryland's energy future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brenda Myers

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