



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 648

DATE: February 17, 2026

SPONSOR: Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation Committee

CONTACT PERSON: Bryan Howard (bryan.howard@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support (Department of Environmental Protection)

Office of Home Energy Programs - Uniform Redetermination Process - Age

House Bill 648 lowers the eligibility age for simplified reenrollment for senior households with fixed incomes from 65 to 60. The bill will make it easier for many seniors in Maryland to renew their enrollments with the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) and to participate in energy assistance programs.

OHEP provides critical utility bill assistance for income-qualified individuals. Interest in these programs is rising as utility bills continue to climb; the Maryland Department of Human Services reports a 16% increase in Electric Universal Service Program bill payment from FY2025 to FY2026. As growth strains staff resources, it is important to find efficiencies in program delivery and make things easier for beneficiaries. House Bill 648 achieves both outcomes through a simple but important process improvement that will reduce cumbersome and time-consuming steps for older households to continue receiving support through OHEP. The bill will make it easier for many Marylanders to benefit from OHEP programs that can lower their energy bills.

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection respectfully requests that the Environment and Transportation Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 648.