



# Environment and Transportation Committee

## 2/17/26 HB 648 Hearing

### *Office of Home Energy Programs - Uniform Redetermination Process - Age*

## **FAVORABLE**

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Hello Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and members of the Committee.

The Maryland Energy Advocates Coalition works to ensure that low-income families can afford their utility bills through our advocacy, reporting, and consumer education.

HB648 reduces the automatic energy assistance redetermination age from 65 to 60, which matches Maryland's official definition of a "senior."

Our coalition, and our partners that signed on to this testimony, strongly support HB648 which will expand the successful energy assistance redetermination process.

In 2022, energy advocates worked to pass SB719 to codify Maryland Office of Home Energy Program's (aka OHEP) energy assistance redetermination for seniors who receive fixed incomes. SB719 required all OHEP local agencies to participate in automatic redetermination. Instead of seniors re-applying for energy assistance in-person every year, under SB719, OHEP sends a personalized redetermination letter to last year's grant recipients aged 65 and older. Residents confirm there's been no status change, sign and mail the redetermination letter back in a pre-stamped envelope. Their local OHEP agency certifies that fiscal year's grants. The benefits are fewer visits into local offices, less stress on seniors, and more efficient OHEP processing.

Per OHEP reporting, in fiscal year 2025, 19,156 redetermination letters were mailed and 17,709 were awarded energy assistance grants. A 92% participation rate.

HB 648 expands this effective redetermination process to include ages 60-64 on fixed incomes.

**The following organizations sign on in support of this written testimony:**

AARP Maryland  
Cancer Support Foundation  
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility  
HoCo Climate Action  
Institute for Energy and Environmental Research  
National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of its low-income clients  
Marylanders Against Poverty

Thank you for sponsoring this bill and we ask for a favorable report.

*Laurel Peltier*  
Laurel Peltier, Chair, Maryland Energy Advocates Coalition    greenlaurel7@comcast.net

FISCAL YEAR 2025

DSS OHEP DATA

Redetermination Notices Issued to Eligible Households by County					
	July 2024	October 2024	January 2025	April 2025	Total
ALLEGANY	393	0	316	179	888
ANNE ARUNDEL	333	0	293	210	836
BALTIMORE	318	0	691	870	1,879
BALTIMORE CITY	340	0	1,560	1,286	3,186
CALVERT	101	0	134	26	261
CAROLINE	189	0	178	9	376
CARROLL	195	0	325	62	582
CECIL	382	0	193	31	606
CHARLES	222	0	198	55	475
DORCHESTER	318	0	205	45	568
FREDERICK	597	0	173	2	772
GARRETT	505	0	79	8	592
HARFORD	339	0	403	92	834
HOWARD	60	0	384	160	604
KENT	159	0	39	9	207
MONTGOMERY	73	0	784	488	1,345
PRINCE GEORGES	186	0	598	346	1,130
QUEEN ANNES	161	0	126	15	302
SOMERSET	266	0	173	16	455
ST MARYS	325	0	176	62	563
TALBOT	122	0	142	8	272
WASHINGTON	429	0	502	145	1,076
WICOMICO	424	0	385	55	864
WORCESTER	222	0	245	16	483
Total	6,659	0*	8,302	4,195	19,156
* October Notices have not been issued as of October 31, 2024 due to delays by the CDC. Notices went out in November and will be reflected on the January 2025 report published in February 2025.					

SOURCE → DHS, Maryland.gov / office-of-home-energy-programs / ohep-monthly data ①

\*January 2025 numbers are published in February 2025.

\*April 2025 numbers are published in May 2025


Redetermination Application Received by County FY 25	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	Total
ALLEGANY	223	75	12	68	229	68	180	49	18	86	12	12	1,032
ANNE ARUNDEL	153	76	20	38	112	35	115	68	24	86	43	19	789
BALTIMORE	136	92	10	127	259	268	312	154	42	398	102	61	1,961
BALTIMORE CITY	31	182	17	288	295	389	459	441	657	415	489	295	3,958
CALVERT	26	22	12	5	8	4	17	33	22	7	21	3	180
CAROLINE	119	21	7	6	2	2	48	56	6	4	6	3	280
CARROLL	14	32	69	24	14	15	60	122	44	30	14	6	444
CECIL	97	192	10	16	21	7	35	65	10	15	7	1	476
CHARLES	50	62	34	19	14	16	45	37	25	12	38	7	359
DORCHESTER	73	169	14	14	10	11	61	53	4	12	17	8	446
FREDERICK	187	66	157	154	76	58	48	37	42	19	9	7	860
GARRETT	187	191	26	38	26	9	7	34	3	2	2	1	526
HARFORD	88	163	11	26	34	131	59	222	26	43	24	6	833
HOWARD	3	26	9	12	5	10	45	59	67	100	94	38	468
KENT	104	20	7	2	2	0	6	5	6	2	3	0	157
MONTGOMERY	17	31	4	75	364	116	228	270	22	179	90	15	1,411
PRINCE GEORGES	100	39	8	55	255	109	351	106	29	114	39	17	1,222
QUEEN ANNES	66	16	43	0	1	5	60	17	4	11	1	1	225
SOMERSET	53	47	25	27	12	11	28	22	46	29	7	6	313
ST MARYS	59	109	58	15	11	6	34	22	32	15	35	11	407
TALBOT	62	27	10	8	10	16	27	34	27	12	5	0	238
WASHINGTON	220	111	14	36	65	29	171	143	17	72	17	8	903
WICOMICO	66	55	53	84	41	53	74	78	114	65	27	9	719
WORCESTER	32	44	27	20	20	17	26	21	66	45	12	4	334
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>2,496</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>1,773</b>	<b>1,114</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>18,541</b>

Redetermination Applications Approved/Receiving Benefits by County FY 25	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	Total
ALLEGANY	35	216	51	43	104	203	37	171	44	43	50	11	1,008
ANNE ARUNDEL	0	11	157	18	56	53	125	136	56	49	72	19	752
BALTIMORE	7	92	113	17	105	427	73	368	103	171	264	82	1,822
BALTIMORE CITY	5	131	87	213	217	443	445	419	705	364	417	363	3,809
CALVERT	4	23	28	8	5	3	5	17	27	14	19	8	161
CAROLINE	0	30	52	54	8	8	6	18	85	4	3	5	273
CARROLL	5	20	63	35	18	15	32	71	116	26	18	7	426
CECIL	4	22	249	14	11	15	19	26	75	11	12	6	464
CHARLES	2	43	85	23	13	17	19	40	25	18	36	20	341
DORCHESTER	23	94	126	5	17	14	30	68	15	12	12	11	427
FREDERICK	2	17	217	93	129	169	46	33	46	43	17	10	822
GARRETT	96	260	35	32	33	12	3	36	3	1	3	1	515
HARFORD	1	225	29	25	25	140	45	221	35	42	21	11	820
HOWARD	0	1	16	11	9	20	19	16	47	46	144	67	396
KENT	0	114	5	7	2	1	3	5	6	2	5	0	150
MONTGOMERY	0	0	4	35	37	88	262	430	223	45	197	39	1,360
PRINCE GEORGES	19	82	30	43	62	291	149	252	48	51	83	23	1,133
QUEEN ANNES	0	49	68	3	1	5	22	48	6	4	8	0	214
SOMERSET	0	81	33	14	9	31	17	23	32	49	9	6	304
ST MARYS	4	52	140	31	9	13	7	26	19	23	37	20	381

OVER ↓

②

TALBOT	0	82	12	5	13	12	20	32	40	9	8	1	234
WASHINGTON	76	207	49	28	54	45	40	244	38	55	34	9	879
WICOMICO	0	104	53	42	38	86	73	87	67	101	28	13	692
WORCESTER	0	63	28	7	18	36	24	21	26	87	12	4	326
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>2,019</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>1,521</b>	<b>2,808</b>	<b>1,887</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,509</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>17,709</b>

NOTES: After review of reports for the redeterminations, updates were made to the numbers to reflect the updated information.

0!  
0  
Participation!!

Chapter 666

2022 LAW

(Senate Bill 719)

"REDET"

AN ACT concerning

**Human Services – Office of Home Energy Programs – Power to the People Pilot Program Personnel and Uniform Redetermination Process**

FOR the purpose of providing that certain funding for the Power to the People Pilot Program be used to hire certain part–time personnel instead of full–time personnel; requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs to develop a certain redetermination process to assist certain eligible energy customers who are at least a certain age in enrolling in energy assistance programs; and generally relating to the Office of Home Energy Programs and energy assistance programs.

BY renumbering

Article – Human Services  
Section 5–5A–09  
to be Section 5–5A–10  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Human Services  
Section 5–5A–01(d) and 5–5A–08(g)(1)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Human Services  
Section 5–5A–08(g)(7)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Human Services  
Section 5–5A–09  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That Section(s) 5–5A–09 of Article – Human Services of the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 5–5A–10.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

KEEP READING :)

Article – Human Services

5-5A-01.

(d) “Office” means the Office of Home Energy Programs.

5-5A-08.

(g) (1) On or before July 1, 2022, the Office, in coordination with the United Way of Central Maryland and the Fuel Fund of Maryland, shall establish the Power to the People Pilot Program.

(7) (i) For fiscal years 2023 and 2024, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$80,000 to the Office for the Pilot Program.

(ii) The funds appropriated under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph shall be used to hire:

1. one [full-time] PART-TIME intake specialist for the 2-1-1 Maryland United Way Helpline;

2. one [full-time] PART-TIME case manager for the 2-1-1 Maryland United Way Helpline; and

3. one part-time project coordinator at the Fuel Fund of Maryland.

5-5A-09.

WOOHOO!

Was in manual.

(A) (1) **THE OFFICE SHALL DEVELOP A UNIFORM REDETERMINATION PROCESS TO ASSIST ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS WHO ARE AT LEAST 65 YEARS OLD IN ENROLLING IN ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.**

(2) **THE REDETERMINATION PROCESS DEVELOPED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE UPDATED ANNUALLY.**

(B) **THE REDETERMINATION PROCESS SHALL REQUIRE LOCAL ADMINISTERING AGENCIES TO:**

(1) **HAVE AN ACCESSIBLE LOCATION TO RECEIVE ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS’ APPLICATIONS ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE’S CONTRACTUAL OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS; AND**

(2) ESTABLISH A POLICY REFLECTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR APPLICANTS WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR REQUEST ACCOMMODATION, INCLUDING BY:

(I) ARRANGING FOR A HOME VISIT; OR

(II) ALLOWING AN INDIVIDUAL TO APPLY ON THE BEHALF OF AN ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMER.

(C) THE OFFICE SHALL PROVIDE NOTICE OF THE REDETERMINATION PROCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS AND INCLUDE WITH THE NOTICE AN ADDRESSED ENVELOPE WITH PREPAID POSTAGE.

(D) IN ADDITION TO THE NOTICE REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE OFFICE SHALL:

(1) REQUIRE YEARLY VERIFICATION OF STATUS FOR EACH CUSTOMER THAT QUALIFIES FOR THE REDETERMINATION PROCESS;

(2) ALLOW AN ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMER 45 DAYS TO RESPOND TO A REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION; AND

(3) MAINTAIN RECORDS ORGANIZED BY COUNTY, INCLUDING RECORDS ON THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR:

(I) THAT WERE ELIGIBLE FOR REDETERMINATION;

(II) WHOSE NOTICE OF THE REDETERMINATION PROCESS WAS VERIFIED AND RETURNED; AND

(III) THAT WERE REENROLLED IN THE REDETERMINATION PROCESS.

(E) THE OFFICE MAY NOT REQUIRE A NEW APPLICATION FOR A CURRENT ENERGY CUSTOMER WHOSE ELIGIBILITY HAS NOT CHANGED FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

(F) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1 EACH YEAR, THE OFFICE SHALL REPORT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE INFORMATION COLLECTED UNDER SUBSECTION (D)(3) OF THIS SECTION.

(G) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THIS SECTION.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2022.

**Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 29, 2022.**