

HB220 - SUPPORT
Fassil Ketema
Tenants of The Grand Apartments
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HB220 SUPPORT

Environment - Water - Individual Unit Meters

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 3rd, 2026

Good afternoon Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

My name is Fassil Ketema and I am testifying favorably in regards to House Bill 220.

Below, I have copied the petition signed and submitted by 50 tenants of The Grand Apartments (5801 Nicholson Lane, North Bethesda, Maryland 20852) to request an investigation into the business practices and credit reporting activities of Metergy Solutions:

We, the undersigned (**redacted**) tenants of The Grand Apartments, respectfully submit this petition to bring to your attention serious concerns regarding the billing and credit reporting practices of Metergy Solutions, a Canada-based sub-metering and billing service provider retained to administer individual tenant charges for water and sewer usage at our residence.

A four-and-a-half-month investigation conducted by the Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) that was completed in May 2025 concluded that Metergy Solutions has engaged in several improper and concerning practices, including:

1. Permitting collection efforts to proceed on disputed bills that are still pending resolution.
2. Failing to exercise due diligence when estimating water bills during periods of meter malfunction.
3. Lacking transparency about which apartment units were affected by defective or inoperable meters.
4. Ineffectively managing billing related to water leaks, resulting in inaccurate or inflated tenant charges. The OCP report further found that the lack of oversight over private sub-metering systems and related service fees poses a continuing risk to tenants. Currently, Metergy Solutions charges residents an exorbitant monthly administrative and billing fee of \$13.40, which represents an average of over 40% of the actual total monthly water and sewer costs for most tenants. Prior to the retention of Metergy, tenants were customarily charged a \$1 monthly administrative fee.

Despite these official findings, Metergy Solutions has issued a notice to all residents of The Grand Apartments stating that, effective August 15, 2025, it will begin reporting any late or missed water/sewer

bill payments to a credit reporting agency managed by Equifax. The notice further warns that such reporting may negatively affect residents' credit standing, even though several disputes and billing irregularities identified by OCP remain unresolved.

WE THEREFORE PETITION the Maryland Department of Labor and any other appropriate state or county authority to:

1. Determine the legality of Metergy Solutions' plan to report tenants' water and sewer billing histories to credit reporting agencies.
2. Investigate the company's billing, metering, and collection practices as identified in the Montgomery County OCP report.
3. Implement appropriate oversight and consumer protection measures to prevent unfair or deceptive sub-metering and billing practices in Maryland.

We respectfully request that your offices take prompt and appropriate action to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability in Metergy Solutions' billing and credit reporting operations - both for the residents of The Grand Apartments and for other Maryland tenants affected by similar practices.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Tenants of The Grand Apartments

5801 Nicholson Lane

North Bethesda, Maryland 20852

Signed by 50 total residents including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| - Fassil Ketema | - Jamie Wollard |
| - Susan Asch | - Laurie Zeitlih |
| - Elisabeth Richards | - Shari Porter |
| - Ann Bausch | - Jamie Lee Wollard |
| - Debra L. Weingarten | - Bacilia C Herrera |
| - Keith White | - Rina Grimaldi |
| - Marilyn Hardis | - Nancy Sprinkle |
| - Tobias Gottesman | - Sue Ducat |
| - Jeff Szekely | - Shelley Szekely |
| - Howard Diener | |