

**OPPOSE - Senate Bill 83
Utility Regulation – Consideration of Climate and Labor
Senate Finance Committee**

Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc. opposes Senate Bill 83, which would, among other requirements, mandate that the Commission collect confidential and proprietary labor data and report that data to the General Assembly.

While it is understandable for the General Assembly to be interested in labor standards and general wage and benefit information for Maryland citizens, it is unreasonable to ask companies to publish specific confidential and proprietary data for all the world to see. Doing so would: 1) greatly reduce our ability to negotiate competitive contracts when they are put out to bid, 2) prove detrimental to our contractors having their salaries and benefits made public and 3) be extremely burdensome on the contractors themselves as they would be required to assemble and disclose this very specific information, which they too may consider confidential or proprietary. Such a bill may seem innocuous, but carries enormous risk to the labor market in Western Maryland where substantial movement between contractors could increase our unit costs and decrease our available contractor resources. Any cost increases arising under this bill would be passed along to our customers in the normal ratemaking process conducted by the Public Service Commission.

Senate Bill 83 is also unnecessary. Existing Maryland law not only authorizes but expressly mandates that the Public Service Commission consider climate and labor issues in all of its decision making. Section 2-113 (a)(2) of the Public Utilities Article provides: “In supervising and regulating public service companies, the Commission shall consider the public safety, ***the economy of the State, the conservation of natural resources, and the preservation of environmental quality.*** (emphasis added).

For the reasons set forth above, Columbia Gas opposes Senate Bill 83, and urges an unfavorable report.

January 26, 2021

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