

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Dereck Davis
Chair, Economic Matters Committee
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 231
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 606 - Electricity and Gas - Limited-Income Mechanisms and Assistance

Dear Chair Davis:

Thank you for your letter dated April 29, 2021, and thank you for your continued leadership in ensuring that Marylanders have access to funding that provides access to affordable home energy. The changes affected by House Bill 606 will improve access to energy assistance and improve outcomes for households in need. The Department of Human Services (Department) looks forward to convening the Workgroup on Low-Income Utility Assistance to continue to develop constructive recommendations for increasing efficiency and improving outcomes for energy assistance programs offered by the state.

Regarding the specific requests for regulatory and administrative changes in your letter, the Department conducted an initial review of the regulations, policies, processes, and systems that require modification with the implementation of these changes. The initial response to these requests are outlined below.

- **Make EUSP available to those who pay their electric bills through their condominium fee or rent.**

The Department plans to expand EUSP eligibility to those applicants who are not directly responsible for paying their electric bill. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 07.03.22.02 B(12) will be modified to define “electric customer” as an individual or household: 1) with an active retail electric service account in a household member’s name; 2) who is applying for retail electric service for the household; or 3) responsible for paying for electric service costs through rent or fees.

Given the timeline for the regulatory promulgation process, the Department anticipates that updated regulations will be effective by July 1, 2022. In addition to the regulatory changes, the Department’s Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) is modifying policy documents, forms, agency training, and the OHEP Data Management System to implement this change.

- **Give Marylanders the choice to apply either for EUSP and MEAP together or directly to EUSP without requiring the documentation required by LIHEAP.**



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The Department is reviewing the request to remove the “qualified alien” requirement from EUSP eligibility from legal, fiscal, and program perspectives. The findings will be presented, and the issue addressed through the Workgroup on Low-Income Utility Assistance created by the HB 606 legislation. If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Government Affairs, Lauren C. Graziano, at 443-571-6452 or at laurenc.graziano@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lourdes R. Padilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lourdes R. Padilla
Secretary