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Anne Arundel County

Economic Matters Committee

*Subcommittees*

Alcoholic Beverages

Chair, Unemployment Insurance

*House Chair*

Joint Committee on

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB 1001 - Human Services - Office of Home Energy Programs - Uniform Redetermination Process – as amended**

**SPONSOR TESTIMONY**

**Cross-file: SB 719**

**House Economic Matters Committee, March 3, 2021**

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and Members of the Committee,

The purpose of **House Bill 1001** is to make it easier for households with residents that are 65 years old and older to stay enrolled in the energy assistance programs by streamlining the eligibility redetermination process.

Seniors that are currently receiving grants offered to Marylanders through the Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP), are often either unaware of the need to be “redetermined” as qualified annually, or they have difficulties with mobility or working through the process.

The process this bill proposes is currently outlined in the Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP) 2021 Operations Manual, and already in practice in a number of local OHEP offices. We want to codify this into law to ensure uniformity.

Because the current process varies by local office, the year often goes by and a grant recipient’s eligibility ends because they didn’t know to request, complete and submit a redetermination letter. If they do follow the process, and they remain eligible each year, they must start the application process over after the third year.

This bill does two things:

- 1) It would ensure all enrollees receive a uniform redetermination letter in the mail that provides them with the ability to answer questions regarding any change to their status that would impact their eligibility.
- 2) It would remove the requirement to reapply after three years. No new application would be necessary as long as the customer indicates that there are no changes to the information that determines their eligibility.

Because this bill creates relief and access to a currently obscure and cumbersome process, I believe it is the right thing to do.

**Because of this, I urge a favorable consideration of House Bill 1001 as amended.**

Note: The amendment to this bill was added to make a correction to the law regarding the Power to the People program, to ensure the staffing requirements matched the funds allocated.