



*The Senate of Maryland*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

**SB 770 - Public Utilities - Homeowner Utility Repair Fund - Establishment**

Testimony of Senate President Bill Ferguson

On March 1, 2022

Before the Finance Committee

**Why This Bill Matters:**

Utility upgrades are a vital component of ensuring a safe and reliable supply of energy to customers from providers. Unfortunately, there are instances in which utility companies, their contractors, or subcontractors are forced to undertake demolition in a resident's home in order to access the necessary equipment.

Although the utility company pays for the demolition itself, the cost of repairs are too often shifted to the homeowner. This is an issue that my office has increasingly encountered as gas meter replacement work is taking place in the 46th Legislative District, and throughout the greater Baltimore region.

**What This Bill Does:**

Senate Bill 770 would tap into unused weatherization and energy assistance programs to create a Homeowner Utility Repair Fund to help low- and middle-income homeowners offset the costs associated with repairing any demolition that was required due to regular maintenance or upgrades. There are amendments in progress to work through the administration and allowable uses of the fund.

**Why You Should Vote For This Bill:**

Low- and middle-income residents are being hit with massive repair costs that they could not have anticipated. Residents in my district and across the State are reaching out with increasing regularity as demolition takes place in their homes, but they are unable to afford the required repairs. At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has already drastically impacted Marylanders' financial security, Senate Bill 770 is intended to provide a lifeline by establishing a fund that will help to offset the expense of restoration.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 770 and I urge the committee to move this bill with a favorable report.