

February 9, 2023

To: Chair Wilson and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee
Subject: HB37 Commercial Law – Consumer Protection – Telephone Solicitation (Stop the Spam Calls Act of 2023)

Position: **Oppose**

Dear Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee,

WGL Energy opposes HB 37 -- Stop the Spam Calls Act of 2023.

For more than 25 years, WGL Energy has been providing a full spectrum of competitive energy solutions including electricity, natural gas, renewable energy, and environmentally friendly energy technology solutions for residential, government, commercial, industrial, and small business customers throughout Maryland. We believe this bill would reduce the energy supply industry's overall ability to continue providing variety of market-based energy solutions to customers in Maryland.

Specifically, the bill requires companies to obtain written consent before contacting a potential customer but provides no other options for how any company would reach new customers via telecommunication.

The bill adds new provisions, Sec 14-4501 – Sec 15-4504, to the current telephone sales law in Maryland, and would require telephone sales callers to identify themselves and/or what company they represent and to provide a phone contact number to all called persons on their caller IDs. WGL Energy already does this. Our telesales efforts show a valid phone number on a potential customers caller ID that can be called back by the person receiving the call if needed.

The proposed statute would also treat robo-calling with recorded messages and auto dialing technology as the same. Per the federal Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), WGL Energy does not dial potential customers and leave recorded messages. However, using an auto dialer allowing companies to efficiently call customers with a real representative on the line, is allowed under the TPCA. This is WGL Energy's current practice when reaching potential customers via telephone.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee for an unfavorable report on HB 37.