



SB1- Electricity and Gas - Retail Supply Regulation and Consumer Protection
Testimony before
House Economics Matters Committee
March 26, 2024
Position: Favorable for SB1 as Amended by the Senate

Dear Chair Wilson, Co-Chair Crosby and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

My name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of SB1 as amended in the Senate**, which will increase Maryland regulation of third party providers, provide rate oversight and reporting, and includes provisions to protect vulnerable populations. As amended we understand SB1 will cover residential, not commercial customers. Additionally, green power retail energy offers rates will be reviewed and approved by PSC. Retail energy can offer “green power” but the PSC will gain its first-ever authority to review why it’s “green power” and approve the supplier's offer in an effort to price it fairly. This oversight has been lacking.

Common sense regulation of this industry is long overdue. The environmental community was told that supporting third party providers who provide “green energy” plans, would result in the creation of more renewable energy in the U.S., if not in Maryland. In fact, we now know that this rarely occurs. And the whole RECs system is very opaque to the public. It is virtually impossible for the average person to find a third party provider whose RECs create new truly renewable energy. Additionally, in Maryland the facts show that third party providers have swarmed to this state with poorly trained and duplicitous salespeople targeting low income neighborhoods and the elderly with offers that are in the long term far more expensive than SOS, enticing many to switch.

We learned from SOS & retail rate data sourced from the Department of Energy’s EIA 861 files (<https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/eia861/>) that Maryland customers who switch paid an average of \$500 over SOS, the second highest rate in the US.

This bill is an important step in stopping exploitation of Marylanders in the name of “CHOICE”. There is no real choice when consumers cannot access the complete and accurate data.

Please untie the hands of Maryland agencies like the Public Service Commission and the Office of the People’s Counsel to protect the best interests of Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable (or unfavorable) report.

Virginia Smith
Columbia, MD 21044