

SB1 Electricity and Gas - Retail Supply - Regulation and Consumer Protection

House Economic Matters Committee

Favorable

March 26, 2024

Good afternoon Chair Wilson and members of the Economic Matters Committee. I am Karen Kalla, volunteer legislative aide and executive council member of AARP Maryland, and Montgomery County resident. I am submitting my support for SB1 as an individual, but with the knowledge of having followed this bill and the hearings closely through my roles at AARP. I would like to thank Senator Augustine for his commitment to and sponsorship of this important bill.

I appreciate the work that has gone into moving forward, some form of regulations on the energy retail choice industry. Please vote favorably to pass SB1 in its amended form without further amendments.

You know the facts and you know the stories of those residents who have suffered financial hardships due to unregulated practices of the energy retail choice industry. Yes, we should be educated consumers, but that does not relieve the industry of transparency in bold print and accountability for fraudulent or misleading advertising and practices. If the industry and its salespeople are acting in good faith, then the penalties will not apply – period. Since the industry has not acted in good faith as evidenced, then regulations and penalties are the next step to hopefully get their attention and to protect Maryland consumers who are only seeking the best options for their individual energy needs.

Please vote favorably for SB1 and provide Maryland residents with a range of energy options that are understandable, clear, honest, and affordable.