

Testimony Supporting SB001
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
January 25, 2024

Re: This is an infuriating case of ‘No Good Deed Goes Unpunished. To think it is legal in Maryland for an energy company to take over \$10,000 from us, has me spitting nails. This must stop. Maryland must pass SB1.

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

During COVID in 2020, my husband and I switched our Baltimore County BGE account to **CleanChoice Energy**. Their marketing clearly claimed that if we switched to their “clean electricity” we were buying wind and solar energy. Today, CleanChoice’s web site marketing describes our environmental impact as: *“You’ll be greatly reducing your carbon footprint by sourcing electricity that comes from clean, renewable sources. You’ll also be helping to increase demand for clean energy, paving the way to become less reliant on polluting fossil fuels.”*

As fierce environmentalists, we are taking many steps in our life to live more sustainably, hoping to ensure a healthy planet for all future generations. Climate change is real, it’s getting worse and we feel a deep responsibility to take action, anyway we can.

Our Baltimore County home is large and over the past few years, we felt our BGE bill was very expensive. We chalked it up to the higher rates we heard about on the news. So imagine my shock when I’m at a meeting and my friend Laurel Peltier is in attendance. Another attendee mentioned that I should have Laurel “check my BGE bill” to see what’s going on. I knew something was very off when she immediately asked me to call CleanChoice to make sure that I had canceled our contract!

Here’s what we learned that day:

- Our contract switched to variable rates, or started on variable rates from day 1.
- We never heard from, received any letters, or any materials, **ever**, from CleanChoice the 3 years we were their customer.
- For many months, our account was charged between **\$0.35 to \$0.41 a kilowatt hour and BGE’s was about \$0.10 / kilowatt hour.**
- Given our home uses about 30,000 kilowatt hours a year, anyone can do simple math and realize each year we paid thousands of dollars more, for....**RENEWABLE ENERGY CERTIFICATES!**
- We weren’t even getting wind energy from a wind farm feeding energy into the grid.
- These certificates are beyond confusing, and we paid over \$10,000 for some fictional, green idea, from someone selling a credit from their wind farm. Another party bought the power. Are you serious? We were duped. None of this was clear. None of this was explained to us to be in the material we signed.

To think it is legal in Maryland for an energy company to take over \$10,000 from us, has me spitting nails. We thought we were being responsible citizens - and now we discover we have been duped - - but *legally duped*. This must stop now. Maryland must pass SB1.

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