

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 00001
Residential Retail Electricity – Regulation and Consumer Protection

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

My name is Anne Manuel and I've lived in Silver Spring, MD., for 39 years.

I am deeply concerned about the ever-more urgent threat climate change poses to our world. That's why my husband and I have been willing for several years to pay a premium to have our electricity come from renewable sources. That's why we chose WGL Energy's CleanSteps Wind Power for our home in Silver Spring and cabin in Myersville, MD. We were assured by the company's literature that, and I quote, "*CleanSteps® Wind Power covers 100% of your electricity usage, and is composed of 100% wind energy.*"

We've been paying a premium of more than \$1,000 each year to WGL for what we believed to be wind power. We learned last year that the company's claims – like claims by many other third-party electricity suppliers – are entirely misleading. Unlike community solar arrangements, WGL apparently is not selling us power generated by wind. The company is not buying wind power on our behalf. We are actually getting the same mix of the local power grid supply as our neighbors who have not opted for 100% clean energy and are not paying a premium. Instead, the company is selling us Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). A REC, as I understand it, is a bookkeeping measure indicating that a megawatt of renewable energy *has been generated* (somewhere at some time). My premium does not, in fact, purchase wind power.

But potentially more serious than the fact that my family has been misled by "green power" marketing is the potential impact such misunderstandings can have on the climate. I'm sure we are not the only family or business in Maryland who has believed that we no longer needed to conserve energy since our usage was (we thought) actually encouraging renewable energy production. Families like ours are not only paying more, but using more. *Instead of easing the climate crisis, false green energy claims are making it worse.*

None of this can be gleaned from the third-party supplier marketing. This is an example where regulation is desperately needed to accomplish two goals: 1) ensure that consumers know what they are purchasing; and 2) press the companies to make available genuine clean energy choices for consumers such as ourselves.

The legislature missed an opportunity to address this problem last year. We don't have time to let another year go by. I believe that SB 00001 is a step in the right direction toward achieving these goals. Thank you for your consideration.