



Councilman Mark Conway
Baltimore City Council *Fourth District*

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TO: Chair Brian J. Feldman; Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan; members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Mark Conway (District 4, Baltimore City Council; Chair, Public Safety and Government Operations Committee)

RE: SB1 (Electricity and Gas - Retail Supply - Regulation and Consumer Protection)

POSITION: SUPPORT

I am writing today to offer my support for SB1 (Electricity and Gas - Retail Supply - Regulation and Consumer Protection), which would add new consumer protections to Maryland's residential energy marketplace so regulated and retail energy work together for the benefit of residents.

SB1 would make the first significant changes to the state's deregulated electricity market since it was created by the General Assembly in 1999, allowing energy suppliers to compete with monopoly utilities for the right to sell electricity to ratepayers. It would implement several guardrails to level the playing field for consumers and protect vulnerable populations. The choice between regulated and retail energy has been exploited by aggressive door-to-door salespeople who target low-income consumers in underserved neighborhoods with offers that are simply too good to be true. SB1 requires energy salespeople who want to sell utility service to obtain a state license, and warns that individuals could be fined up to \$25,000 for scheming to sell fraudulent energy packages. The bill would give buyers peace of mind that were they to switch to retail energy suppliers, they would not be unknowingly making a bad choice based on factors they were simply unaware of.

Additionally, SB1 would give consumers who want to support green energy confidence that when they choose "green power" utilities—such as energy sources that are 100% renewable, 100% wind, 100% hydro, 100% solar, or 100% emission-free—they are actually supporting Maryland's climate strategy. SB1 does this by requiring energy companies to purchase more Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection (PJM) renewable energy certificates, meaning that the certificates are local, and guarantees this by way of a disclosure. The energy suppliers would be fined if they aren't truthful about their clean energy options and where they come from.

SB1 would give consumers a complete picture of the marketplace and ensure low-income and marginalized consumers are not taken advantage of when simply trying to select the lowest rate. I hear often in my district from low-income residents that have fallen prey to sales schemes from salespeople trying to make a quick buck on an unsuspecting victim, leaving them with high bills and difficult-to-exit contracts. The neighborhoods I represent deserve a fairer market when exploring utility options.

It is our duty to protect those at risk and I urge a favorable report on this common-sense legislation.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Conway, Jr.