



**SUPPORT – Senate Bill 171
Landlord and Tenant – Office of Home Energy Programs – Financial Assistance Act
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc., a natural gas utility providing energy to more than 34,000 customers in Maryland’s western counties of Allegany, Garrett and Washington, supports Senate Bill 171, as currently written.

The legislation requires a landlord to accept financial assistance from the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) in the Department of Human Services. In addition, the legislation requires a landlord to provide a tenant with appropriate and needed information and documentation necessary to determine a tenant’s eligibility for financial assistance.

OHEP financial assistance programs are created to assist those struggling to pay utility bills. Individuals in need of financial help who apply for such programs should not face additional burdens when requesting assistance and need utility-related information from their landlord. Landlords should accept financial assistance on behalf of tenants who apply for assistance programs from OHEP and provide a tenant with appropriate and needed information and documentation to apply for such assistance programs.

Columbia Gas of Maryland believes the requirements of Senate Bill 171 as currently written are appropriately and reasonably crafted policies related to tenant rights and landlord responsibilities and supports the legislation in its current form.

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