



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1035
Public Utilities - Electricity Generation Planning - Procurement, Permitting, and Co-Location
(Next Generation Energy Act)

House - Economic Matters Committee
Senate - Education, Energy, and Environment
Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

February 28th, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Wilson, Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable with amendments testimony in support of HB1035**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 60,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families in Maryland. We overwhelmingly represent low-income rate payers.

Our membership is also experiencing rent hikes and are the most energy burdened in the state. We applaud Leadership for taking this issue seriously. However, expansion of gas infrastructure is an absolute regression. Though building out gas or expanding existing or retired facilities may increase electricity supply now, it will only result in another catastrophic rate hike in the coming years when utilities charge customers for the new gas plant and the replacement of the service and transmission lines.

CASA urges the exclusion of any gas expansion.

However, we also offer an incredibly important amendment if gas is inevitable:

“Certificates for Public Convenience and Necessity for fossil fuel power generating stations requested in census tracts with an EJ score higher than 75% or within 1.5 miles of a high EJ census tract shall be rejected by the PSC.”

While we are in a rate-hike catastrophe for ratepayers, increasing the local pollution burden in overburdened communities will result in temporarily lower utility rates for all but will guarantee more medical treatment and hospital visits in the areas where gas plants are built or expanded. If no consideration is placed on existing burden in potential siting of new gas, then the state is guaranteeing more sickness in high EJ score communities. New gas is a temporary fix, and new gas in overburdened communities is a promise to make low-income communities of color sick.

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