



## Testimony on SB 937 / HB 1035

### Public Utilities - Electricity Generation Planning - Procurement, Permitting, and Co-Location

#### Joint Meeting of Education, Energy and the Environment Committee and the Economic Matters Committee

**Date: February 28, 2025**

**Position: UNFAVORABLE**

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 900 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses these existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and the issues of pollution and toxic effects on health, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice.

#### **CPSR strongly opposes SB 937 & HB 1035.**

There is a real problem of high and rising electricity prices. There is also a truly critical problem of worsening climate chaos. It would be reckless and foolish to seek to solve the first problem by worsening the second.

Climate chaos represents an extremely serious threat to our civilization. We are not talking about inconveniences, but very serious changes to the livelihoods of many in the world. The massive fires and hurricanes that we have seen in our country are only part of the picture. Droughts, heat emergencies, and desertification in some regions, and floods and sea level rise in others are already resulting in mass migrations that destabilize nations and trigger wars. As these impacts multiply, there is a real risk of catastrophic changes to our civilization.

In fact, while it is **entirely predictable** that SB 937 / HB 1035 would contribute to worsening climate chaos, it is not even clear that it would lower electricity prices. My colleagues will show that less expensive non-fossil-fuel sources of electricity are readily available. In view of the long term climate and pollution costs of fossil fuels, we should turn to increased efficiency and to these other sources of electricity in order to solve our current problem.

In addition to all of the above considerations we should recognize the immediate medical consequences of increased fossil fuel use. We know quite well that burning fuels results in increased heart and lung disease, especially asthma. Methane may be better than coal and gas, but it is still a significant culprit.<sup>12</sup> Add to that the many tons of polluting methane that are lost to the environment on the way to the power plant.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lung.org/clean-air/outdoors/what-makes-air-unhealthy/electric-utilities>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/power-sector/human-health-environmental-impacts-electric-power-sector>

Good members of the committees, we have a very serious problem of predictably worsening climate chaos, primarily as a result of our use of fossil fuels. Why would we even consider increased fossil fuel use as a solution for any other problem ?

Our motto at CPSR, and a fundamental principle of public health, is that **we must prevent what we cannot cure**. The eminent German physician and legislator Rudolf Virchow opined that “politics is nothing else but medicine on a large scale.” Therefore, we physicians wish to join you legislators in working to prevent what we cannot cure by taking the step of giving an **unfavorable report on SB 937 & HB 1035**

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