

Testimony Supporting HB419: Natural Gas - Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement  
(Ratepayer Protection Act)  
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Position: SUPPORT

Members,

Investor-owned utilities are profiteering while Maryland ratepayers struggle to afford the cost of living.

I deliver Meals on Wheels in Baltimore City and I see and hear first hand how much people are struggling with their BGE bills.

I am a lifelong Maryland resident and ratepayer. I expect clean energy—and my expectations are not being met, by a long shot. We should have begun transitioning away from methane infrastructure MUCH sooner. The Ratepayer Protection Act is the LEAST you can do in this moment:

- Ensure gas infrastructure spending is cost effective;
- Prioritize safety by using modern leak detection technology;
- Use a “fix it first” approach;
- Consider non-pipeline alternatives to gas; and
- Give gas customers 2 years notice before work so they have time to plan.

This bill is a common sense adjustment to mitigate the bad idea that STRIDE was, and is sorely needed.

Our Investor-owned utilities should be permitted to get a fair return on their cost of capital, NOT on their cost of equity, which spurs a pernicious upward capital spending cycle and skyrocketing rates as we see and feel all too well—but that is another bill—we need, AT MINIMUM, the protection HB419 bill offers immediately.