

**HB 1035 - UNFAVORABLE**

John Stith

CCAN Action Fund

[john.stith@gmail.com](mailto:john.stith@gmail.com) 301-502-3634

**HB 1035 - Public Utilities - Electricity Generation Planning - Procurement,  
Permitting, and Co-Location (Next Generation Energy Act)**

Economic Matters Committee

February 28, 2025

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee.

I live in the Carole Highlands neighborhood of Prince George's County, in Legislative District 47B. My address is 7219 16th Ave, Takoma Park.

Pepco's transmission towers rise more than 100 feet over our neighborhood. Pepco has given us permission to fight a battle in the "meadow" under the towers – a battle against invasive callery pear trees. Our group of volunteers cuts the small trees down one by one, and Pepco's contractor sprays herbicide on the worst clusters. So far our victories only last a few years. The invasive plants keep coming back, ruining the native blackberry bushes, the nesting habitat of field sparrows, and the stands of wildflowers.

As we do this, we see the other battle losses. The bobwhites are gone. The tower fooled a pair of falcons into making a nest in the structure, then the record-hot summer killed their eggs. Air pollution gives us respiratory diseases that kill people. A few of our poor and ill neighbors camp out near the towers. Members of our community fled the droughts that destroyed their farms in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

This battle is coming closer to all humans. Droughts are increasing around the world, making it harder to keep global food prices low. Air pollution is so bad in some of the world's cities that people just stay inside. We all need to join in this battle to stabilize our ecosystems, climate, and air quality. For anyone who has trouble breathing or affording food, the stakes are very high.

I see Governor Moore in this fight. He has pledged by 2035 we'll generate as much clean electricity in Maryland as the electricity we use. He respects the Climate Solutions Now Act. His administration is pointing out many actions Maryland can take to deploy clean energy faster, especially off-shore wind and more solar, which will be major sources of electricity.

I see Delegate Charkoudian and Senator Brooks in this fight with their Abundant Affordable Clean Energy (AACE) Act to reform the market and bring savings to rate-payers. I volunteer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, so I can be in this fight too.

The portion of the Next Generation Energy Act that pursues new nuclear technologies is part of this fight. And we have just seen huge wins in Texas and California. In 2024 alone, each state brought enough battery energy storage online to cover the amount of summer peak capacity the Next Generation Energy Act seeks to address. The world now has a powerful new tool. “Virtual power plant” policies are also advancing. Electricity generation is one area where we can win this battle, and other states are already winning the battle.

But the openness of this bill to new gas generation is a retreat – a retreat in the face of victory. We are temporarily still burning some coal and gas as we deploy the cleaner technologies, and we can continue to do so to avoid outages. We don’t need an additional gas plant. With the many leaks from the natural gas network, and the powerful greenhouse effects of methane pollution, gas plants are no better than coal plants for the climate. Steering the investment of billions of dollars to building new gas capacity is a waste we cannot afford. We need that new investment to go to generation facilities we will actually use for decades.

This bill plans a “cost-benefit analysis” of our health and our racing towards droughts and unaffordable food. The costs of gas are clear and the benefits of clean energy are clear. It’s hard to trust a bill and a process that doesn’t see that, after decades when the costs of fossil fuels were lied about and ignored, and people died from air pollution as a result of those lies.

There is much to do. Pursuing last-generation energy is a distraction we cannot afford. Across Maryland, we are all doing what we can, like our group protecting our neighborhood’s meadow under the power lines. Please finish your fight to have those power lines carry clean electricity.