



**HB0960 - FAVORABLE**

Sonia Demiray  
Climate Communications Coalition  
[sonia@demirayink.com](mailto:sonia@demirayink.com)  
202-744-2948

**Investor-Owned Electric, Gas, and Gas and Electric Companies –  
Cost Recovery - Limitations and Reporting Requirements  
(Ratepayer Freedom Act)**

Economic Matters Committee  
March 13, 2025

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

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Sonia Demiray. I am the Executive Director of the Climate Communications Coalition, a member of the Mid-Atlantic Justice Coalition, and of the Maryland Climate Justice Wing. The Climate Communications Coalition strongly supports HB0960.

HB0960 will clarify the law and codify consumer protections by prohibiting utilities from charging ratepayers for expenses that do not benefit ratepayers, including advertising and political advocacy costs that should be charged to shareholders. Marylanders are already struggling to pay their power bills while utilities are thriving.

This bill will:

- 1) Prevent investor-owned monopoly gas and electric utilities from spending ratepayer money on lobbying, trade associations, advocacy, political groups - many of which use their power to delay the much needed clean energy infrastructure- , in addition to promotions and advertisements, chartered aircraft, entertainment, and gifts.
- 2) Require utilities to file annual reports which disclose any and all payments, and their amounts made towards the above. Transparency is key for accountability, and we, the ratepayers, deserve to see the numbers.

This bill could save customers hundreds of thousands of dollars on their utility bills as has happened in the states that already passed similar legislation.

We urge a favorable report on HB0960. Thank you.

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