

**HB1035/SB937 - UNFAVORABLE**

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**HB1035/SB937- Public Utilities - Electricity Generation Planning - Procurement,  
Permitting, and Co-Location (Next Generation Energy Act)**

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

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Chair Feldman, Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Kagan, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the  
Education, Energy, and the Environment and Economic Matters Committees,

I am writing to strongly urge an unfavorable report on HB1035/SB937, the inaptly named “Next Generation Energy Act.” I have lived in Silver Spring, Maryland for forty years. As someone who is deeply concerned about the existential threat posed by climate change, I regularly volunteer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN). My number one consideration when deciding how to vote is the candidate’s record on climate change.

The core of my objection to the “Next Generation Energy Act” is that it will drag us back to “Last Generation” construction – new methane gas plants. These plants are hardly the energy of the future. More likely they are the energy that will mess with our futures. These plants will be extraordinarily expensive, slow to come on line, damaging to our environment, and will move our climate goals out of reach.

Any new gas plant in Maryland is expected to cost some \$3 billion and to take years before it is ready to distribute power. Meanwhile, there are many renewable energy sources in the cue with PJM. Any of those sources could be brought on line more quickly and at less expense than gas plants.

Moreover, a new methane gas plant would be terribly damaging to our environment. Maryland banned fracking for good reason in 2017. What sense does it make now to build gas plants that will distribute fracked gas from Pennsylvania? Pollution from the plant will be extremely damaging to communities that already face a greater burden from climate change and fossil fuel pollution. Emissions from gas plants will increase rates of pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases as well as asthma and stroke.

Finally, Maryland has committed to have converted to 100% clean energy by 2035. Building any new gas plants will blow a hole in that commitment for decades to come. Clean and economical

alternatives are already here. The only ones who will benefit from new gas plants in Maryland will be the fossil fuel companies – the rest of us will lose.

For these reasons, I respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB1035/SB937.

In addition to helping us to meet the greenhouse gas emission reductions we committed to in the Climate Solutions Now Act, the Better Buildings Act will reduce energy costs and improve public health by requiring all newly constructed buildings to be heated without the use of fossil fuels.

In terms of meeting our climate goals, electrifying all new construction should be a no-brainer. More than half of Maryland's energy-related greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings, 2/5s of that from burning fossil fuels for heating and cooking. Continuing to install gas hookups to new construction would lock us into several more decades of emissions and derail our climate commitments.

Switching to electricity for heating and cooking is becoming increasingly economical with the availability of improved technologies. In trying to do our part for the climate in our 103-year-old house, my husband and I switched to energy efficient heat pumps this year, leading to a noticeable reduction in our heating bills. As everyone on this committee can attest, the early months of 2025 have put any heating system to the test and we have been happy with the outcome. And once summer comes in, our systems become highly effective air conditioners. As soon as our water heater and stove reach the ends of their life spans, we plan to replace them as well with electric appliances.

Research has increased our awareness of the threat to health posed by gas appliances, which emit carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, benzene and formaldehyde into our homes. A study published in the International Journal of Epidemiology found children living in a home with a gas appliance were 42% more likely to develop asthma than those without such exposure. Gas stoves leak chemicals, including the carcinogen benzene, even when turned off. Meanwhile fossil fuel furnaces in Maryland are responsible for three times as much pollution as all the

state's power plants combined. Getting fossil fuels out of our buildings makes sense from an economic, health, and climate viewpoint.

Maryland would hardly be an outlier in approving this legislation. Similar laws have been enacted by more than 100 state and local governments, including several Maryland counties.

At a time when our nation's efforts to fight climate change are under assault, Maryland needs to stand firm and meet our commitments. This effort would be a win for the economy and public health as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring my concerns to the committee's attention in support of SB0804..