



HB1035

Next Generation Energy Act
Testimony before Economic Matters Committee
February 28, 2025
Position: Favorable

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the committee, my name is Peter Alexander and I represent the 900+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in opposition to HB1035**.

We appreciate that Maryland ratepayers are struggling to pay rising utility bills and are looking to the General Assembly for solutions. However, we believe the solutions proposed in **HB1035** will not result in greater energy reliability in the timeframe needed and will increase rather than lower electric rates in Maryland. Unfortunately, there are misconceptions that the steep jump in electricity costs today is due to the 2024 PJM capacity auction and the impending retirements of Brandon Shores and Wagner coal plants. We believe the best policy solutions for Maryland are those that address the real and complex reasons for rising electricity costs.

To that end, we support several other bills and policies that offer no-regrets solutions more likely to result in near-term reliability improvements and at lower costs, while also allowing Maryland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Examples of these policies include incentives for utility scale battery storage and solar (both utility scale and community solar) and getting more out of the grid we have through grid enhancing technologies and reconductoring.

HB1035 will neither increase near term reliability or reduce rates while burdening Marylanders with polluting and costly investments for decades. Gas generating plants are massive undertakings which take years to complete, In 2023, the Virginia utility Dominion proposed building a new gas plant at the location of an old coal power plant, which they promised would be operational in 2026. Now they say it won't be running until at least 2030.

Worse, **pollution from gas power plants drives up costs for Marylanders**. The local air pollutants contribute to asthma and other health conditions that increase healthcare costs, while gas combustion contributes to climate change. HB1035's provision to promote new methane gas projects is **a significant step backwards** contradicts the Climate Solutions Now Law.

Similarly, adding nuclear energy will not bring new generation to Maryland for years if not decades. The Georgia Power Vogtle Units 3 and 4 took 15 years to build and cost \$36.8 billion.



The levelized capital costs of electricity production of **nuclear is three times the cost of solar**. (1)

HB1035 will not bring down rates or add near-term stability and will hinder more expeditious and lower cost solutions to ratepayer protection and grid reliability such as those proposed in SB316 the Abundant Affordable Clean Energy Act, SB37 the Affordable Grid Act, SB37 the Utility Transparency Act, and SB998 the Ratepayer Protection Act. It also seems premature to offer long-term and extremely expensive nuclear and fossil fuel energy solutions, without conducting the integrated energy resource planning envisioned in SB909 Energy Resource Adequacy and Planning Act and a complementary data study bill SB0116.

We respectfully urge an unfavorable committee report.

Peter Alexander, PhD

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(1) <https://www.lazard.com/media/xemfey0k/lazards-lcoeplus-june-2024-vf.pdf>