

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

February 28th, 2025

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

As a family physician I urge an unfavorable report on HB1035/SB937, the Next Generation Energy Act. I am an active member of Third Act Maryland.

The Next Generation Energy Act will allow for new gas plants to be constructed in Maryland. This will not solve the issue of high utility bills because of the time that it takes to get a new gas plant up and running. These fossil fuel powered plants may take years before they are creating energy that can be distributed to the public, whereas clean energy alternatives like batteries or solar can be online much faster. If the goal is to lower energy bills in the state, a new gas plant is not the most effective strategy.

Additionally, the cost of building the type of a gas plant approved in this bill is equal to \$1000 per kilowatt of energy produced. This means a new gas plant could cost Maryland \$3 billion dollars. This is far too expensive an investment to make with no immediate relief on utility bills.

Furthermore, a new gas plant would be counterproductive in helping Maryland reach its climate goals set forth in the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. The state has set a goal of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2031 and Governor Moore issued an executive order last spring to create a framework to reach 100% clean energy by 2035. To achieve either of these goals, the state should be investing in clean and renewable energy rather than allowing for gas provisions.

As a public health physician I see in real time the adverse health effects that fossil fuels are causing. As physicians we know that we need to decrease the use of fossil fuels, not build new gas plants.

The pollution that will result from a new gas plant will wreak havoc on the health of Marylanders, particularly those who live in overburdened and underserved communities that are already facing the unequal effects of climate change and fossil fuel pollution. The greenhouse gas and particulate emissions that will be produced by a new gas plant will increase Maryland residents' chances of pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases, developing asthma, strokes, and premature death. The people of Maryland deserve to keep their lights on without putting their health and climate at risk.

I respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB1035/SB937.

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