



Solar United Neighbors Action

1350 Connecticut Avenue NW,
Suite 412, Washington, DC 20036

RE: HB 960 – Investor-Owned Electric, Gas, and Gas and Electric Companies - Cost Recovery -
Limitations and Reporting Requirements (Ratepayer Freedom Act)

Favorable

March 11, 2025

Chair Wilson and members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

Solar United Neighbors Action provides this written testimony regarding House Bill 960, the Ratepayer Freedom Act. SUN Action's position on this legislation is Favorable.

SUN Action is a 501(c)4 non-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of solar owners and supporters in Maryland and across the country. Together with our 501(c)3 affiliate Solar United Neighbors (SUN), we help people go solar, join together, and fight for their energy rights. SUN is dedicated to creating a clean, equitable, resilient energy system that benefits everyone. SUN has helped more than 1,600 Marylanders add 13.5 MW of solar to their homes and businesses and represents forty thousand solar owners and supporters across the state. These comments are on behalf of SUN Action.

Electric utilities have been given monopolies, and we need to hold them accountable to ratepayers who have no choice in who provides their electricity. Investor-owned electric utilities should have shareholders pay for lobbying, public relations, and trade association dues. There are already rules set up by the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) that limit utility use of ratepayer funds for lobbying and promotional advertising. This bill will add clarity and transparency to this existing foundation. Washington Gas recently tried to pass on \$419,000 to ratepayers that was for promotional advertising. The PSC prevented these costs from going to ratepayers, but we need transparency to ensure that costs like these are not passed on to



ratepayers. We need to pass HB 960, to further limit the use of ratepayer funds for these activities that are often not in ratepayers' interest and to ensure transparency and accountability for utility spending. Increasing transparency and providing annual data publicly will allow organizations like Energy and Policy Institute and others to dig into these records and ensure that ratepayers are not on the hook for unnecessary expenses.

SUN Action urges a favorable report on HB 960 to increase utility accountability and transparency in Maryland!

From,

Liz Veazey

Director of State Policy Campaigns

lveazey@solarunitedneighbors.org