



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 937

Public Utilities – Electricity Generation Planning – Procurement, Permitting, and Co-Location (Next Generation Energy Act)

Date: February 28, 2025

To: Education, Energy, & Environment Committee

Position: **UNFAVORABLE**

From: Gussie Maguire,
MD Staff Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 937, which incentivizes and expedites nuclear and natural gas energy generation projects in the state. CBF understands that Maryland faces energy challenges, especially from new “large load customers”, as described in the bill text. That said, additional procurement of energy generation that meets the minimal standard of “a lower greenhouse gas emissions profile than coal or oil” must not be relied upon to answer those challenges.

Despite natural gas’s reputation as a “clean burning” fuel, its emissions pose the same threats to the climate as coal and oil, just at slightly lower volume. Natural gas is primarily composed of methane, which is even more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. Any leaks in pipelines to or equipment at a natural gas-burning facility or other utility customer would result in increased contributions of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from the state, undermining climate goals. Bill language requiring that a natural gas plant must be able to be converted to a different type of fuel does not guarantee that it will be converted in a timely fashion. Furthermore, fossil fuels and biofuels both produce nitrogen oxides when burned. Nitrogen oxides in the atmosphere fall with precipitation into the state’s waterways and contribute to nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

The Public Service Commission, the Department of the Environment, and the Department of Natural Resources are all required by this bill to waive or expedite regulatory requirements or decisions in order to meet arbitrary time frames for accelerated energy generation projects. Siting of energy projects, whether fossil fuel, nuclear, solar, or wind, must be carefully considered to ensure that minimum impacts are made upon the environment and upon communities surrounding the sites. State agencies engaged in this important work must not be stripped of the opportunity to make the right decision for each project, for state residents and for the state’s valuable natural resources.

CBF urges the Committee’s UNFAVORABLE report on SB 937.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.