



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 28, 2025

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

On behalf of Third Act Maryland, I urge an unfavorable report on HB1035/SB937, the Next Generation Energy Act.

The Next Generation Energy Act will enable the construction of new methane gas plants in Maryland, which, if built, will put the state wildly off course in (1) reaching the climate goals established by the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 and (2) complying with Governor Moore's executive order directing the state to reach 100% clean energy by 2035. Methane gas plants are anything but clean. Not only do they spew carbon emissions into the atmosphere, they also leak methane, which is 81 times more potent a greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>1</sup>

Those emissions will have grave health impacts on Maryland's most vulnerable citizens, including children and seniors, low-income and poor people, and people of color—the very people Maryland's Democratic party leaders purport to stand up for and protect. If a new methane gas plant is built, we will see increases in asthma, cardiopulmonary disease, and deaths, which will in turn burden the state's healthcare system, drive up insurance costs for everyone, cause children to miss school days, and hurt Maryland's economy. These and other social costs of a new gas plant are estimated to be \$425 million annually.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond CO<sub>2</sub> equivalence: The impacts of methane on climate, ecosystems, and health, Environmental Science & Policy, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1462901122001204>.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the EPA's estimate of the social cost of carbon at \$190 per ton and an estimated 2,238,480 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted per year. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/02/climate/biden-social-cost-carbon-climate-change.html>.

Moreover, the gas plant will likely increase costs for ratepayers and will take too long to bring online in order to meet Maryland's near- and medium-term electricity needs. Maryland ratepayers would be much better served by electricity generated via solar and wind, which is actually clean and next generation, coupled with battery storage.

Furthermore, no publicly available modeling has yet to find that Maryland needs new gas power to balance the grid. Plus the basis for the proposed gas plant is an increased demand for electricity in coming years, to a large degree based on new data centers to be built in Maryland. Recent reports suggest that demand may be weaker than projected; Microsoft has canceled some leases for data centers, raising questions on energy capacity estimates for the future.

Building methane gas plants to generate electricity is a last generation solution to meet our energy needs for the future. Twenty-five years into the 21st century, it makes no sense to use 20th century technology to generate electricity.

I respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB1035/SB937.