



SB771: Human Services - Energy Assistance Programs - Administration and Funding

Position: Favorable

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members of the Committee

Chair Feldman and members of the Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on SB771, which would make improvements to the state's energy assistance programs.

As the members of this committee are painfully aware, energy rates have risen dramatically in recent years due to a variety of factors. Thousands of Marylanders each year face shutoff notices due to nonpayment, while many others are forced to juggle multi-hundred-dollar utility bills alongside the ever-increasing costs of rent, groceries, and other necessities. In fact, when Economic Action Maryland Fund surveyed our members and other stakeholders this winter, 63% stated utility bills were their primary concern.

Energy assistance is a vital tool in helping low-income Marylanders manage their rising utility costs. The Department of Human Services is better equipped to manage the Electric Universal Service program, as it already manages other energy assistance programs. This move streamlines government services and more efficiently targets the program to households in need of assistance.

Given the escalating costs of fuel, expanding the program is a valuable service to low-income households. This is particularly important because some households may only have gas heat, and those bills were severe this cold winter.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB771.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

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