



PROGRESSIVE MARYLAND

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Bill Title: SB2 Investor-Owned Electric, Gas, and Gas and Electric Companies - Cost Recovery - Limitations

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Erica Puentes

Date: February 3, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Erica Puentes, I am the Legislative Coordinator for Progressive Maryland, but I am also writing this testimony on behalf of myself and my grandmother, Maria. We are Baltimore City (D41) residents. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Speaker of the House Peña-Melnyk who is championing this bill and leading the charge on affordability for everyday Marylanders like us. We are calling on the Senate to work in partnership with the House and advance this agenda.

For residents like my grandmother, a homeowner in Northwest Baltimore who lives on a fixed income, rising utility bills aren't just painful - they make it hard to make ends meet. Her house, like many in our neighborhood, was built in the early 1900s and lacks much of the solid weatherization and insulation that could help keep the cold out during weeks of bitter temperatures. I try my best to cover our drafty windows every year, but each winter the cost to stay comfortable always knocks us out.

The fact is, these rate hikes didn't just fall out of the sky. BGE has spent millions of dollars on unnecessary infrastructure projects that bring a nice rate of return for the company's shareholders but result in higher bills for my grandmother and her neighbors - and to add insult to injury, this money is being used to fund corporate executive bonuses and private jets.

Our neighborhood is home to many elderly homeowners who live on fixed incomes that are forced to make difficult choices between basic needs like heat and medication while dealing with the financial strain of high utility bills. At the same time, Marylanders all over the state are being hit by the effects of disastrous policy choices on the federal level like deep cuts to healthcare that promise to rock our state's economy.

Ratepayers are battling the worsening cost of living crisis, a hostile federal government, and exorbitant utility bills. On top of that, utility companies are asking us to subsidize their corporate excesses. Instead of allowing utility companies to squeeze everyday Marylanders, the state should lower utility costs by centering Marylanders and not industry - and that means regulating utility companies so that they are using ratepayer dollars responsibly. **For these reasons, my grandmother and I respectively urge a favorable report on SB2** because ratepayer dollars should not be lining the pockets of corporate executives. When working class and elderly Marylanders regularly make the choice between paying for basic needs like medicine and heat, the last thing we want is for our already strained income to fund the wealthy corporate class.