



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

*Baltimore Jewish
Council*

*Catholic Charities of
Baltimore*

*Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council*

Church of the Brethren

*Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland*

*Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County*

*Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland*

*Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging*

*Maryland Catholic
Conference*

*Mental Health
Association of Maryland*

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

*National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter*

Presbytery of Baltimore

*The Coordinating
Center*

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The Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (MSCAN) is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that support policies that meet the housing, health, and quality of care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income seniors.

MSCAN supports SB 771. This bill takes meaningful steps to strengthen Maryland's energy assistance system, a system that is important to many older adults living on fixed or limited incomes.

Stable and affordable access to energy is essential for the health, safety, and dignity of Maryland's older adults. Many older adults are facing increasingly difficult choices when utility costs rise faster than their incomes - whether to heat their homes, fill their prescriptions, or buy groceries. Energy assistance programs serve as life-preserving supports, preventing catastrophic utility shutoffs and allowing older Marylanders to remain in their homes.

SB 771 strengthens these programs by transferring administration of the Electric Universal Service Program from the Public Service Commission to the Office of Home Energy Programs in the Department of Human Services. This change aligns program oversight with the state entity that already serves households in need, which will help create a more streamlined, coordinated, and user-friendly system.

The bill also enhances Maryland's capacity to respond to energy hardship by expanding authorized uses of the Strategic Energy Investment Fund to include fuel assistance programs. This additional flexibility is crucial for seniors in older or inefficient homes who may rely on multiple heating sources, as well as those living in rural areas with limited utility options. By modernizing the funding framework, SB 771 helps ensure that older Marylanders receive the support that meets their energy needs.

For these reasons, and because access to reliable, affordable energy is foundational to aging in place, MSCAN respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 771.