

Mr. Chair, Madam Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee:

My name is Jane Valentino. I have over 20 years of experience in the energy industry. I began my career in energy consulting, later worked at a nonprofit focused on renewable energy policy and consumer protection, and currently work at a company administering state renewable energy incentive programs. However, I am here today solely as a Maryland constituent who values the right to make my own energy choices, which is why I'm testifying in support of Senate Bill 749.

I moved to Maryland 15 years ago, and until this past year, I purchased renewable energy from WGL. As someone concerned about climate change and the impacts of fossil fuels generation, I willingly paid more to purchase renewable energy. I valued the ability to choose my power source rather than defaulting to BGE's fossil fuel mix. My voluntary purchase went beyond what is required under the state's renewable portfolio standard and directly supported additional renewable generation.

I chose WGL because it offered Green-e® Energy Certified renewable energy, meaning its claims were independently verified, that no renewable energy credits were being double-counted, and that I was not being misled. I received annual rate updates and was given a straightforward opportunity to renew or cancel my contract. In short, my experience was transparent, accountable, and consumer-friendly.

With the passage of SB1, not only was my renewable option eliminated, but all competitive energy choice was eliminated for Maryland residents.

I understand and appreciate that SB1 was intended to protect consumers from deceptive practices, and I recognize that some individuals were taken advantage of in the absence of adequate oversight. However, SB1 did not simply remove bad actors from the market; it created barriers so significant that that reputable suppliers exited the market altogether.

Although my primary motivation was to purchase renewable energy, many consumers relied on competitive suppliers for long term price stability. The marketplace offered real and meaningful savings. Today, we have no alternative but to pay rising utility rates, and there are no renewable energy options, even for well-informed consumers.

I support Senate Bill 749 because it restores balance and common sense to Maryland's energy policy. SB749 preserves critical consumer protections and oversight, while removing the overly restrictive barriers that have shut down all competition. By restoring a competitive marketplace, SB749 will once again allow consumers to support renewable energy, pursue long-term price stability, and avoid being locked into a single utility option as rates continue to rise. I urge you to support this legislation and return meaningful energy choice to the people of Maryland.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Jane Valentino