



FAVORABLE – Senate Bill 26
Public Utilities – Off-Grid Electricity Providers - Exemption
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Columbia Gas of Maryland, Inc., (Columbia Gas) is a natural gas utility providing energy to more than 34,000 customers in Maryland’s western counties of Allegany, Garrett and Washington, and we support Senate Bill 26.

The legislation modifies existing Maryland law to create a new category of electricity provider in Maryland, one that can generate electricity, but not connect to the PJM Interconnection power grid. Such an electricity provider would not cross state lines, is not located within and would not cross any federal, state or local roadway or right-of-way, and would begin to generate, transmit, distribute or sell electricity on or after October 1, 2026.

This new public policy idea would address the issue of large load customers who may wish to do business in Maryland. Such large load customers would not adversely affect utility rate payers if they do not connect to the PJM grid, yet they would be able to obtain the electricity they may need with this approach.

PJM is currently facing significant challenges, including potential energy shortages by 2027 due to rapid demand growth from large load customers like data centers, which is driving a need for over 30 gigawatts of new capacity in the PJM region. If they are connected to the grid, large load customers could add to these issues. Therefore, serving large load customers without grid connected generation is a better choice to minimize stress on the system and cost impact to customers.

Any idea to secure more electric generation in Maryland and the PJM region with a focus on larger load customers should be pursued in a way that minimizes cost increase to customers and addresses Maryland’s growing energy needs and lack of in-state electric generation.

Columbia Gas believes the requirements of Senate Bill 26 are appropriately and reasonably crafted policies related to new electric generation in the state of Maryland and requests a favorable report on the bill.

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