

SB373-HB66.Pavlak.FAV_RGGI withdrawal.O^0W.v3.s.pdf

Uploaded by: Alex Pavlak

Position: FAV

February 19 2026
2/17/2026 9:39 AM

HB66(SB373).Pavlak.FAV

RGGI withdrawal

Oral & written testimony

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Madam Vice Chair.

My name is Alex Pavlak I'm a PhD engineer from Severna Park and the chairman of the Future of Energy Initiative. My advocacy is numbers.

A year ago January, I published the first of three OpEds (below) urging Maryland withdrawal from RGGI.

Maryland's response to me has been happy talk. I've been told that RGGI is working just fine and in a sense it is. It's working exactly as planned and it's raising tons of money. I've also been told that Maryland fossil fuel plants are retiring for economic reasons which is also true. RGGI imposes a \$275 million/yr tax on a \$600 million industry. Maryland fossil fuel plants cannot afford to pay the tax and compete with PJM plants that do not pay the tax.

- This is not complicated. RGGI is bad policy because taxing boundaries do not align with market boundaries for PJM-RGGI states.
- RGGI caused the Brandon Shores early retirement resulting in last year's Howard County blackout,
- RGGI caused Maryland natural gas plants to file for early deactivation in 2024. This was reversed by capacity market prices big enough to pay the RGGI tax and stay in business. BGE ratepayers get the bill.
- RGGI is increasing not decreasing regional GHG emissions [as reported by TCR](#). RGGI in PJM states is not a climate program it is a poorly designed retrogressive tax.

Maryland's withdrawal from RGGI can be staged over several years, coordinated with PJM capacity auctions. If FERC terminates RGGI the impact would be disruptive.

I urge a favorable report.

Please find below links to the three Baltimore Sun OpEds urging RGGI termination

- When green policy backfires, [November 10, 2025](#). (RGGI is simply bad policy for PJM RGGI states)
- The real reason your electric bill is increasing, [June 8, 2025](#), (July '26 begins the big increases)
- Maryland is on a path to rolling blackouts, [January 6, 2025](#), (foreshadowed the Howard County blackout)



SB 373_MDCC_Restoring Energy Freedom Act_UNFAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Hannah Allen

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 373

Position: Unfavorable

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Date: February 19, 2026

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

Senate Bill 373 (SB 373) requires the Governor to withdraw the State from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Maryland businesses and households continue to face significant cost pressures, and energy affordability remains a critical concern for employers across the state. Participation in RGGI imposes additional compliance costs on electricity generation that can ultimately be passed on to consumers, increasing utility costs and operating expenses for businesses of all sizes. At a time when Maryland is grappling with broader economic challenges, policies that further increase the cost of doing business risk undermining the State's competitiveness.

Senate Bill 373 provides Maryland with greater flexibility to pursue energy and environmental policies that reflect the unique needs of our economy, workforce, and ratepayers. By stepping away from a multistate framework, the State can evaluate and implement approaches that balance environmental stewardship with economic growth, reliability, and affordability. This flexibility is particularly important for energy-intensive industries and employers that are sensitive to price volatility and regulatory uncertainty.

The bill also promotes transparency and accountability by requiring a clear and orderly withdrawal process and reporting to the General Assembly. This ensures policymakers retain oversight while considering future energy strategies that support emissions reductions without imposing unnecessary burdens on businesses and consumers.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests a **favorable report on SB 373**.

SB373 GHG withdrawal.pdf

Uploaded by: Kirk McCauley

Position: FAV



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

Chair: Brian J Feldman and members of Education, Energy, and Environmental Committee

RE: SB 373 Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

Position: favorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we represent service stations, convenience stores, and repair facilities across the state as a non-profit trade group established in 1937.

When looking at the state costs in this bill along with consumer costs, withdrawal makes sense. Consumers are fed up with double and triple electric bills, inflation at the grocery stores is ongoing and this bill would make fuel costs skyrocket. At a time when the state is 1.6 billion in debt, facing rolling brown out in electricity grid, this seems like a good option.

We ask for favorable vote SB373.

Any questions can be addressed to Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmda.net

ALA_MD_RGGI Bill _SB373_Oppose_2-12-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Aleks Casper

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 373
Education, Energy and the Environment
Oppose
February 12, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments. The American Lung Association strongly opposes Senate Bill 373 which would repeal Maryland's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). The Lung Association believes that Maryland must continue its participation in RGGI to make meaningful reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that would protect the health and well-being of Marylanders.

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

The American Lung Association's [2025 State of the Air¹](#) report revealed that 46% of Americans, more than 156 million people live in counties that had unhealthy levels of ozone and/or particle pollution. In Maryland there were mixed results with three counties receiving a failing grade for high ozone pollution and another ten counties receiving a 'C' or lower for unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution. Ozone and particle pollution can harm the health of all Maryland residents and of particular risk are children, older adults, pregnant people, and those living with chronic diseases – approximately 81,000 children and 520,000 adults are living with asthma in Maryland and another 270,000 are managing other lung illnesses. Both ozone and particle pollution can cause premature death and other serious health effects such as asthma attacks, cardiovascular damage, and developmental and reproductive harm.

Climate change is one of the most urgent threats to human health of the 21st century. Reduction of harmful pollutants caused by burning fossil fuels and other combustion is critical to improving the local health today and ensuring a stable climate for future generations. Climate change is first and foremost a public health issue and one that creates disproportionate impacts across Maryland's diverse communities. Further, climate change is making the job of cleaning our air much more difficult as temperatures rise and drive conditions for unhealthy ozone pollution days, among other health challenges.

The American Lung Association supports measures to reduce all emissions that contribute to climate change. Such measure should include but are not limited to transitioning away from fossil fuels to increased use of clean, non-combustion, renewable energy sources and zero-emission transportation technologies, expanding energy conservation and efficiency measures and establishing enforceable and science-based limits on emissions for all sectors including industrial, energy, commercial, residential and transportation. We support measures to reduce other outdoor air pollutants while reducing emissions that cause climate change.

In 2007, Maryland joined RGGI. RGGI is a collaborative effort among states in the Eastern part of the country to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from power plants in each participating state. The participating states include Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Together these states have established a regional cap on CO₂ emissions, essentially setting a limit on the emissions from regulated power plants in the given states. Over time these caps will decline and so will CO₂ and other harmful emissions.² For example, a July 2020 study published in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives concluded, based on particle pollution reductions, “RGGI has provided considerable child health benefits to participating and neighboring states beyond those conventionally considered. Moreover, those health benefits are estimated to have significant economic value.”³

Participation in RGGI allows for CO₂ emissions to decline in a planned and predictable way to protect health and safeguard our children’s future. Since RGGI started emissions have already reduced more than 50%. Through the auction process, it allows funds to be raised to be reinvested into local communities.²

The American Lung Association believes that all people are entitled to breathe healthy air and to be free of the adverse health effects of air pollution. We support the protection of all people from the harm of air pollution, especially those who suffer disproportionate exposure from local sources of emissions. We recognize that major sources of air pollution are often located near where many people, especially communities of color or lower income, live and work which means their exposure to pollutants emitted can be more immediate and disproportionately harmful.

The Lung Association strongly opposes efforts to repeal Maryland’s participation in RGGI through Senate Bill 373 and encourages Maryland to continue the commitment to fight climate change and remain actively participating in RGGI.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and if you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at aleks.casper@lung.org or 202-719-2810.

Sincerely,



Aleks Casper
Director of Advocacy, Maryland
American Lung Association



¹ American Lung Association. State of the Air Report, 2025. Available at: <https://www.lung.org/research/sota>

² The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative 101 Fact Sheet. September 2021.

https://www.rggi.org/sites/default/files/Uploads/Fact%20Sheets/RGGI_101_Factsheet.pdf

³ Frederica Perera, David Cooley, Alique Berberian, David Mills, and Patrick Kinney. Co-Benefits to Children’s Health of the U.S. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Environmental Health Perspectives 128:7 CID: 077006 <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP6706>.

See also, ABT Associates. Analysis of the Public Health Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, 2009–2014. 2017.

<https://www.abtassociates.com/insights/publications/report/analysis-of-the-public-health-impacts-of-the-regional-greenhouse-gas-0>

ECA testimony SB0373 RGGI.pdf

Uploaded by: Frances Stewart

Position: UNF



SB0373 - UNFAVORABLE
Frances Stewart, MD
Elders Climate Action Maryland
frances.stewart6@gmail.com
301-718-0446

SB0373 – Environment – Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal

Meeting of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 19, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge an unfavorable report on SB0373.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

The clean energy transition is an essential part of that future.

One of the most effective ways Maryland has reduced greenhouse gas emissions and supported the clean energy transition is through our longstanding participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

The cleanest, cheapest energy is the energy we don't need to use. RGGI has helped Maryland improve energy efficiency, resulting in decreased electricity demand despite a growing population and economy. It has encouraged the growth of clean, affordable renewable energy. Those improvements have allowed consumers in the RGGI states to save over \$1 billion in energy costs. It has created thousands of jobs and added over \$4 billion in economic value. And it has dramatically reduced pollution.

Carbon pollution from the electricity sector has been cut by more than half. It has also reduced emissions of many other dangerous pollutants – mercury, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter.¹ Our cleaner air brings many health benefits, especially for our children.² An analysis by Abt Associates³ in 2017 showed

Maryland

Table 7. Avoided Health Effects in MD due to RGGI

| Health Endpoint | Cases Avoided due to RGGI | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | Total |
| Acute Bronchitis | 24 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 7 | 54 |
| Adult Mortality | 16 - 36 | 2 - 4 | 1 - 2 | 5 - 10 | 8 - 17 | 5 - 11 | 36 - 81 |
| Asthma ER Visits | 10 | 1 | <1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 23 |
| Asthma Exacerbations | 469 | 55 | 26 | 132 | 220 | 134 | 1,036 |
| Cardiovascular Hospital Admissions | 5 | 1 | <1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 12 |
| Infant Mortality | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 | <1 |
| Lower Respiratory Symptoms | 310 | 36 | 18 | 89 | 148 | 91 | 692 |
| Minor Restricted Activity Days | 13,196 | 1,560 | 759 | 3,815 | 6,347 | 3,862 | 29,538 |
| Non-fatal Heart Attacks | 1.6 - 15 | 0 - 2 | 0 - 1 | 0 - 4 | 1 - 8 | 1 - 5 | 4 - 34 |
| Respiratory Hospital Admissions | 4 | <1 | <1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Upper Respiratory Symptoms | 443 | 52 | 25 | 127 | 212 | 130 | 987 |
| Work Loss Days | 2,213 | 261 | 127 | 639 | 1,063 | 647 | 4,950 |

Their economic analysis suggested that avoiding those infant deaths was worth between \$ 880,000 and \$1,000,400, but we believe most parents and grandparents would say it was priceless.

This bill’s shortsighted attempt to withdraw Maryland from RGGI would not help to solve the affordability crisis. It would seriously damage our health and our economy and exacerbate the climate crisis. For all of these reasons, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on SB0373.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ “The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Is a Model for the Nation,” July 14, 2021, <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/regional-greenhouse-gas-initiative-model-nation>.

² Frederica Perera et al., “Co-Benefits to Children’s Health of the U.S. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative,” *Environmental Health Perspectives* 128, no. 7 (2020): 077006, <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP6706>; “RGGIHealthStudyExecutiveSummaryJan2017,” n.d.

³ “Analysis of the Public Health Impacts of RGGI 2009-14 Appendix - State Level,” n.d., accessed February 4, 2026, <https://www.abtglobal.com/sites/default/files/files/Projects/RGGI%20state%20level%20results.pdf>.

MDE SB 373 OPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: UNF



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

Senate Bill 373 - Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

Position: Oppose
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: February 19, 2026
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **OPPOSES** SB 373.

Bill Summary

Senate Bill 373 would require the Governor to begin the process of withdrawing Maryland from participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a market-based program that is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Governor would also be required to provide a report to the Maryland General Assembly thirty days after the State receives the withdrawal notice.

Position Rationale

RGGI is the country's first binding cap-and-trade system for the power sector. The program is a collaboration among 10 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states to cap and reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution from power plants. Under RGGI, fossil fuel-fired power plants must purchase a credit, or "allowance," for each ton of CO₂ they emit, which is done through quarterly regional auctions conducted by the RGGI states. Maryland's share of the proceeds raised at auction go into the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) and are invested in pollution reduction and ratepayer benefit programs.

MDE opposes legislation that would degrade the economic prosperity, human health, and environmental protection benefits that RGGI provides for Maryland. Over 16 years of implementation, it has cut carbon pollution from power plants in participating states in half - much faster than the rest of the country - and has produced billions of dollars in electricity bill savings and economic benefits, and tens of thousands of jobs across the RGGI region.¹ In fiscal year 2025, RGGI auction revenues provided \$267 million to SEIF for further investment in the state.²

Accordingly, MDE asks for an **UNFAVORABLE** report for SB 373.

¹ www.rggiprojectseries.org.

² Maryland Energy Administration, Strategic Energy Investment Fund, Activities for Fiscal Year 2025, Volume 1, Released January 2026. <https://energy.maryland.gov/Reports/SEIF%20Vol%201%20FY25.pdf>.

SB0373_DHS_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Hayes

Position: UNF



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON SB 373 - REGIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INITIATIVE -
WITHDRAWAL (RESTORING ENERGY FREEDOM ACT) - POSITION: UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for its consideration and respectfully requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 373 (SB 373).

With offices in every Maryland jurisdiction, DHS provides preventive and supportive services, economic assistance, and meaningful connections to employment and career opportunities to help Marylanders reach their full potential. Through the Family Investment Administration (FIA), DHS administers critical energy assistance through the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) that would be significantly impacted by SB 373.

SB 373 would make electric bills significantly less affordable for over 165,000 Maryland households who currently receive electric utility assistance. If SB 373 is passed, the Governor would need to begin the process of withdrawal from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). The withdrawal from RGGI, as proposed by SB 373, would dismantle the special funding for Maryland's Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) that supports Maryland's electric assistance programs. Without replacement funding, such as the use of general funds, DHS would be forced to significantly or abandon curtail electric utility assistance, leaving households in every county in Maryland vulnerable to electric shutoffs, summer heat emergencies, and persistent utility debt.

25 S. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-3500
Tel: 1-800-332-6347 | TTY: 1-800-735-2258 | www.dhs.maryland.gov

RGGI auction proceeds go into SEIF, which acts as the primary funding source for both the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP), providing ongoing electric bill payment assistance to income-eligible households, and the Electric Arrearage Retirement Assistance (EARA) Program, which retires past-due electric balances to prevent service termination and restore utility service. In State Fiscal Year 2025, DHS issued approximately \$69 million in RGGI auction proceeds on electric bill assistance and arrearage relief. For more information about EUSP and EARA, please see our [briefing](#) from earlier in the legislative session.

Energy bill assistance is a core household-stabilization strategy. Reliable electric service is essential for heating and cooling, food storage, lighting, access to communication, and the operation of medical and assistive equipment. For low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities, and families with young children, energy assistance prevents shutoffs that pose serious health and safety risks, particularly during periods of extreme heat or cold. By reducing monthly bills and retiring arrearages, these programs help stabilize household finances, prevent the accumulation of unmanageable utility debt, support housing stability, and allow limited income to be directed toward other basic needs such as rent, food, childcare, and transportation. Stable utility service also enables employment, education, and participation in workforce training by ensuring households remain connected to the internet and other essential digital communication tools.

For these reasons, DHS respectfully urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB 373. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony for the Committee's consideration. If additional information is needed, please contact Justin Hayes, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at justin.hayes1@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael López', written in a cursive style.

Rafael López
Secretary

EEE_SB0373_UNFAV_MCEC_2026_02_19.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Magruder

Position: UNF



I. Katherine Magruder
Executive Director
ikm@mdcleanenergy.org
301-314-6061

Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC) was created as a not-for-profit corporate instrumentality of state in 2008 through an act of the Maryland General Assembly.

MCEC focuses on an economic development mission to advance the adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency products, services, and technologies with associated jobs, wages, and tax revenue for Maryland. MCEC leverages private capital and private sector capabilities; facilitates the commercialization of innovative advanced energy technologies; implements climate justice initiatives, strives to reduce energy costs for consumers, and drives reductions in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the use of fossil fuels.

SB0373 - Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

Hearing Date: February 19, 2026
Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Recommendation: UNFAV

MCEC opposes the intent and purpose of this legislation that requires the Governor to withdraw Maryland from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Maryland's participation in this program has generated more than \$1.6B with an additional \$33.5M in set-aside allowance sales during seventy (70) auctions since 2009. The RGGI spending formula mandates that 50% of the proceeds go to Energy Assistance, 10% to low-to-moderate income energy efficiency and community programs, 10% to all energy efficiency and community programs, 20% to renewable and clean energy projects, and 10% to administration of the program.

Since 2017, the State has provided an annual grant of \$1.2M operating capital to MCEC through the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) using RGGI auction proceeds. The RGGI also provides MCEC, the Maryland Energy Innovation Accelerator (MEIA), and the Maryland Energy Innovation Institute (MEI²) with annual funding for operations and programs. Without funding from RGGI, the funding could be significantly reduced or eliminated. Without the appropriation of RGGI funds, MCEC will not be able to operate and deliver on its statute directed mission.

MCEC has proven to be an effective vehicle in efforts to achieve climate and clean energy goals for the State of Maryland. Over the past 17 years state and federal funding invested in and through MCEC have resulted in:

- **Over \$230M in leveraged private capital investment, a 10 to 1 ROI**
- **Over \$93M in project contracts awarded**
- **More than 129M kWh of energy demand reduction**
- **\$10.15M in guaranteed cost savings for consumers**
- **17,279 metric tons of CO₂ avoided**

A [comprehensive study](#) performed by the Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON) at Salisbury University, measuring economic impact, tax revenue, and jobs associated with the activity and investments of MCEC, finds those investments have resulted in:

- **\$621 M in overall statewide output**
- **3000 jobs supported**
- **\$82M in tax revenue, and**
- **ROI of 2.87 to one dollar spent with the center**

Half of the funds collected through RGGI are dedicated by statute to fund rate payer assistance for low-income households in Maryland. Loss of the auction proceeds would directly impact those households in a significant way, impacting affordability.

MCEC urges an unfavorable report and thanks Chair Feldman and members of the committee for their hard work and consideration.

SB 373 - CBF - UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: UNF



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 373

Environment – Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative – Withdrawal

Date: February 19, 2026

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: UNFAVORABLE

From: Allison Colden,
Executive Director

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES Senate Bill 373**, which would withdraw Maryland from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). RGGI is a proven, market-based program that reduces harmful carbon pollution while generating substantial revenue for participating states. Maryland has benefited immensely from this program: through Auction 63 alone, the state has received over \$1.22 billion in auction proceeds, all reinvested to support clean energy, efficiency, and consumer protection programs through the Strategic Energy Investment Fund. These dollars directly support programs that cut energy waste, reduce emissions, and strengthen Maryland's clean-energy economy—benefits that would be lost if the state withdraws from RGGI.

Maryland's participation in RGGI is also essential to meeting the state's climate commitments. RGGI is a central component of Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction strategy, helping drive down CO₂ emissions from the power sector as part of a regional cap-and-invest system. Maryland has committed to science-based climate goals that require swift, sustained decarbonization. By withdrawing from RGGI, the state would forfeit one of its most effective tools for achieving these reductions—tools that not only cut emissions but also deliver co-benefits to air quality and public health. RGGI states have already seen power-sector emissions fall by more than 50% since the program began, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in lowering pollution while supporting economic growth.

Withdrawal from RGGI would undermine energy affordability for Maryland families. RGGI funds are used to support *bill assistance, energy efficiency programs, and clean-energy upgrades*, all of which help lower long-term energy costs for Marylanders. These investments reduce household energy consumption, provide relief to low-income customers, and buffer Maryland residents from volatile fossil-fuel prices. Eliminating these resources would harm the very consumers SB 373 purports to protect. At a time when Marylanders face rising energy costs and climate impacts, abandoning a program that provides *hundreds of millions in cost-saving benefits* is a step backward.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on SB 373. For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

Maryland Energy Adm

Uploaded by: Megan Outten

Position: UNF



Maryland Energy Administration

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: MEA

SUBJECT: SB 373 - Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

DATE: February 19, 2026

MEA Position: UNFAVORABLE

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is Maryland's most successful multi-state program, delivering measurable economic, environmental, and public health benefits to residents across the State. Since joining the program, Maryland has used RGGI proceeds to reinvest in cost-effective energy efficiency programs, clean energy development, and targeted energy assistance for Maryland residents.

Economic Benefits: RGGI proceeds have served as a dedicated funding source that directly goes back into reducing energy bills and assisting households. Half of RGGI proceeds are directed to low-income bill assistance, while nearly one-third of RGGI funds are invested in energy efficiency programs that permanently reduce energy use. This not only improves housing quality, but lowers household electricity and heating bills, and reduces demand to the grid.

Climate Benefits: In 2024, Maryland led the nation in greenhouse gas emission reductions. These avoided emissions translate to reduced public health costs, lower climate-related infrastructure damage, and greater grid reliability under extreme weather conditions.

Community Benefits: The Maryland Smart Energy Communities Program also illustrates how RGGI delivers tangible, community-level benefits¹. These programs focus on planning and capacity building, energy efficiency upgrades, and transportation projects for local governments. These investments lower operating costs for counties and municipalities, freeing up local dollars for other essential services.

Withdrawing from RGGI would remove a proven, cost-effective tool for reducing energy burdens and managing emissions while providing no comparable alternative mechanism in statute. For the reasons listed above, MEA urges the committee to issue an **unfavorable report**.

¹ The Investment of RGGI Proceeds in 2023. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, July 2025.

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison at landon.fahrig@maryland.gov or 410.913.1537.

Energy Freedom Act SB0373 testimony R LeVesque.pdf

Uploaded by: Raymond LeVesque

Position: UNF

February 17, 2026

BILL:

TITLE:

POSITION:

COMMITTEE:

SPONSORS:

HEARING DATE: February 19, 2026

SB0373 (Cross-filed with HB0066)

Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act))

UNFAVORABLE

Education, Energy, and Environment

Senators Hershey and West

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

I am happy to live in District 13 in Howard County, Maryland, and I am writing today **in opposition to** SB0373, the Energy Freedom Act.

This Act proposes withdrawing Maryland from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a multi-state cap-and-trade program for power plant emissions. It would require the Governor to remove the state from RGGI, eliminate associated carbon allowance definitions, and halt the deposit of RGGI proceeds into the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund.

RGGI is a worthwhile and productive method of requiring power plants to pay for their emissions, which encourages them to seek non-polluting alternatives. This is important to limit damage from climate change, as well as improve the health of Marylanders who live near and downwind of combustion-based power plants. Much like it is reasonable and equitable for citizens to pay a fee to dump waste in our landfills and transfer stations, power plants should pay for the waste products that they dump into our atmosphere.

It is well-founded that power plant emissions contribute to climate change and its damaging effects throughout Maryland, and that power plant pollution contributes to poorer health outcomes for people who live near these power plants due to particulate matter and other air pollution. RGGI is a market-based means to cause power plants which produce emissions and pollution to pay for the waste that they produce and dump into our environment. Pulling Maryland out of RGGI would be costly to Maryland residents in terms of dollars and health, as well as increased climate change impacts. It also would amount to a taxpayer funded incentive to power plant owners to continue and perhaps expand their use of fossil fuels, which would be quite undesirable and wasteful.

Maryland residents want effective and fair climate policies and recognize we need a range of tools to tackle this broad, long-term problem. The RGGI cap and trade system is an effective means of helping mitigate climate change. Pulling our State out of RGGI would be ill-considered and against the best interests of Maryland residents.

I appreciate your time in reading my testimony and encourage a UNFAVORABLE REPORT on SB0373.

Respectfully,

Raymond J LeVesque

Howard County District 13 Resident and voter

443-812-4868

levesque.ray2@gmail.com

cc: Senator Guy Guzzone

SB 373 Maryland LCV UNF RGGI Withdrawal.pdf

Uploaded by: Rebecca Rehr

Position: UNF



**MARYLAND
LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION
VOTERS**

**Maryland LCV
Board of Directors**

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Honorable Nancy Kopp
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Kimberly Armstrong

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Joe Gill

Lynn Heller

Honorable Steve Lafferty

Kevin Loeb

Kim Coble
Executive Director

February 19, 2026

Oppose: SB 373 Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV Opposes SB 373 Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act).

SB 373 would require Maryland to withdraw from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a regional cap-and-invest program that Maryland has participated in for more than a decade and that has delivered concrete environmental, economic, and public health benefits to communities across the state.

RGGI places a declining limit on carbon pollution from power plants while encouraging investment in cleaner generation and demand-side resources. Since joining RGGI in 2007, [Maryland has received more than \\$1.6 billion](#) in proceeds from the auction of carbon allowances, which are invested through the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) to support energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy deployment, bill assistance, and weatherization programs that lower energy costs for households and businesses, often serving low-income and overburdened communities. In addition to economic and environmental benefits, these programs also yield public health improvements by reducing co-pollutants associated with fossil fuel generation. Cleaner air means fewer asthma attacks, reduced hospital visits, and lower health care costs, particularly in communities that have long borne a disproportionate share of pollution.

It is imperative for the economic and environmental health of the state that Maryland continue to stay in RGGI. This cooperative, regional, and reasonable approach has resulted in carbon reductions with simultaneous revenue generation, with proceeds invested in ways that deliver cleaner air, lower bills, and greater resilience for communities throughout the state. For these reasons, Maryland LCV urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB 373.

Testimony in opposition to SB0373 - Regional Green

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: UNF

SB0373_RichardKaplowitz_UNF

02/19/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0373 – UNFAVORABLE

Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to SB#0373, Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

As reported by Environment Maryland: ¹

In only one policy area – Maryland’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) – is the state on track to deliver the emission reductions assumed by the Climate Action Plan, due to a region-wide drop in emissions from the power plants regulated by RGGI. As a result, Maryland should consider going further to tighten the program’s cap on global warming pollution.

As explained by the Maryland Department of the Environment: ²

RGGI is a cooperative effort by twelve northeast and mid-Atlantic states to reduce CO2 emissions generated by fossil fuel-fired power plants while benefiting the regional economy. Guiding the program are the shared commitments to reducing CO2 and allowing flexibility and autonomy among the states. Maryland has participated in RGGI since its inception.

This bill would sacrifice the progress made for indeterminate effects on high energy bills and sacrifice progress Maryland has been making environmentally on reductions of greenhouse gases. It would force a bad choice on Maryland by requiring the Governor to withdraw the State from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Maryland must seek other methods and plans for utility bill reductions that do not choose harm to the environment now and in the future.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report and pass SB0373.

¹ <https://environmentamerica.org/maryland/resources/too-little-but-not-too-late/>

² <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/climatechange/rggi/pages/index.aspx>

SB0373 & HB0066 - OPC Testimony in Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: David Lapp

Position: INFO

DAVID S. LAPP
PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

WILLIAM F. FIELDS
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

JULIANA BELL
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

— **OPC** —
OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL
State of Maryland

6 ST. PAUL STREET, SUITE 2102
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202
WWW.OPC.MARYLAND.GOV

BRANDI NIELAND
DIRECTOR, CONSUMER
ASSISTANCE UNIT

CARISSA RALBOVSKY
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 0373/House Bill 0066 – Environment - Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative - Withdrawal (Restoring Energy Freedom Act)

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Environment and Transportation

HEARING DATE: February 19, 2026 (EEE)
February 10, 2026 (ENT)

SPONSOR: Senators Hershey & West
Delegate Chisholm

POSITION: Informational

The Office of People's Counsel (OPC) respectfully offers the following informational comments on Senate Bill 0373/House Bill 0066, the Restoring Energy Freedom Act, which proposes to withdraw Maryland from participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) by repealing various statutes, including sections of State Government Article § 9–20B–05, that provide for Maryland's participation in RGGI and for the disposition of proceeds from the sale of carbon dioxide (CO²) allowances under RGGI.

By way of background, RGGI establishes a declining cap on CO² emissions from power plants in ten states, including Maryland. Power plants in Maryland and other RGGI states must purchase an "allowance" for each ton of CO² they emit. Allowances are auctioned on a quarterly basis by RGGI, Inc., a non-profit corporation that administers RGGI, and proceeds from these auctions are returned to participating states.

As required by statute, 50 percent of RGGI proceeds are currently used to fund Maryland's Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP), which provides energy

assistance to low-income Marylanders, and other electricity assistance programs in the Department of Human Services.¹ In Fiscal Year 2025, RGGI proceeds accounted for approximately 71 percent of EUSP funding. Thus, withdrawing Maryland from RGGI would eliminate most of the State's current energy assistance funding. Without other action to make up for the funding, such as through general funds, withdrawal from RGGI would have a devastating impact on low-income Marylanders at a time when energy costs are rising and hundreds of thousands of Maryland households struggle to pay their energy bills.

In FY 2025, Maryland received more than \$267 million in RGGI proceeds and appropriated \$94 million in proceeds to the EUSP. This \$94 million accounted for approximately 71 percent of total EUSP funding for FY 25, with \$37.5 million in ratepayer contributions accounting for nearly all of the balance.² If Maryland withdraws from RGGI, EUSP funding will be reduced to \$37.5 million per year in ratepayer funding unless the State replaces the RGGI proceeds with another source of revenue. HB 0066 does not provide an alternative source of revenue. Consequently, as drafted, the bill would decimate energy assistance funding in Maryland and harm low-income Marylanders.

OPC appreciates the opportunity to provide this information on the potential impact of SB 0373/HB 0066 on energy assistance and is available to answer questions.

¹ Md. Code Ann., St. Gov't Art. § 9-20B-05(g).

² See, e.g., Md. Pub. Serv. Comm'n, *Electric Universal Service Program 2024 Annual Report Pursuant to § 7-512.1(c) of the Public Utilities Article* (Apr. 3, 2025) at 3, <https://www.psc.state.md.us/about/reports/>.