

HB 1494: Electricity and Retail Gas Supply - Customer Choice, Consumer Protection, and Green Power (Retail Energy Modernization and Consumer Choice Act): Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Environment & Transportation Committee:

I am writing to strongly urge you to **OPPOSE HB 1494** during committee consideration or floor votes.

While presented as promoting "choice" and "modernization," this bill risks significantly harming residential consumers, especially when many families already struggle with high utility bills. Expanding time-of-use rates and long-term contracts can expose households to volatile pricing, complex billing, and higher costs during peak periods, particularly for those unable to shift usage (e.g., families with children, elderly residents, or fixed incomes). Allowing accounts receivable sales increases the risk of aggressive debt collection practices or predatory lending-like structures.

Permitting energy resource aggregators to operate independently of utilities could fragment grid reliability, complicate emergency response, and raise cybersecurity vulnerabilities, exactly what Maryland does not need amid rising cyber threats to critical infrastructure. The mandated PSC regulations for consolidated billing and expedited interconnection may favor large aggregators or suppliers over consumer protections and utility stability.

Exempting certain green power products from marketing and pricing rules could lead to misleading claims, greenwashing, or inflated costs without real environmental benefit, undermining consumer trust and Maryland's legitimate clean energy goals.

Maryland consumers need stronger protections and stable, affordable energy, not further deregulation that benefits suppliers and aggregators while shifting risks and complexity onto households. Recent history shows retail energy deregulation has often led to higher costs, confusion, and reduced real choice for residential customers.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to **vote against HB 1494**.

Thank you for your attention to this critical energy policy and consumer protection issue.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals

