

TESTIMONY OF
LAUREN GREACEN GYGAX
MARYLAND PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

—
TESTIMONY OF
BRITTANY BAKER
MARYLAND DIRECTOR

—
MIKE TIDWELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**HB 1561 - Electricity Generation and Storage - Investor- Owned Electric Companies and
Front-of-the-Meter Storage**

UNFAVORABLE

Environment and Transportation

March 6, 2026

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee,

Allowing utility companies to own generation will not solve Maryland's energy affordability problem. **In fact, it would most likely work against the affordable, clean energy goals of the state.**

Currently, utilities make their profits off big capital spending on local transmission lines and distribution infrastructure. Exelon owned utility companies have already been driving up bills for Marylanders with their costly and unnecessary \$41.3 B 4-year capital expenditure plan, while reporting \$2.8 billion in record-breaking profits.¹ The current affordability crisis is driven by these distribution expenditure decisions, proving that utilities mismanage what the capital investments that they already control. In fact, gas rates have more than tripled since Exelon acquired BGE in 2012,² demonstrating the correlation between Exelon's ownership, intentional overspending on distribution infrastructure, and rate shock. **The last thing the legislature should do is let them do the same for power generation.**

Exelon owns all the biggest utility companies in Maryland - BGE, PEPCO, Commonwealth Edison and Delmarve Power & Light and has a captive customer base. Exelon already acts as a monopoly under these conditions but it is allowed to because regulation can keep them in check. Utilities actually benefit from cost overruns because inflated costs grow their rate base and profits, whereas in competitive markets, investors bear the risk of cost overruns and can even go bankrupt. With utilities, customers take on all risk, and regulators won't let utilities fail, so they'll approve cost increases even from bad decisions. Exelon should not expand their monopoly power by owning another part of the process to bring energy to Marylanders. Monopolies are

¹ <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/exelon-transmission-data-center-capex-earnings/812200/>

² <https://www.thebanner.com/economy/bge-bill-increase-P3REUMUEBRCBRLJSTBNXFQJAPE/>

TESTIMONY OF
LAUREN GREACEN GYGAX
MARYLAND PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

TESTIMONY OF
BRITTANY BAKER
MARYLAND DIRECTOR

MIKE TIDWELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



known to grow corporate power, raise prices for consumers and reduce innovation. We must ensure that Exelon's scope remains limited to distribution.

Further, there is no reason to believe that Exelon has the knowledge, capacity, or expertise to build and own generation. There are serious concerns about how they currently operate, especially with poor management of their call center, and the lack of transparency and major cost overruns around their large transmission projects. One example includes a recent transmission project that has grown from \$800 million to \$1.5 billion in just one year and isn't finished yet, costs will likely continue rising.³ Yet, BGE cannot or will not explain how much power this transmission will bring into the area or what the reliability impacts will be for what is currently a constrained zone.

Finally, Exelon's own investor presentations reveal their true priority is rate base growth, not clean energy. Their investor presentations show how they want to spend capital on infrastructure to grow their rate base. The real solution to energy affordability is to diversify our energy sources. We must be expanding access to solar, batteries, and wind power through the competitive market, as these are cheaper and quicker to get onto the grid.⁴ This is what will bring down energy prices on the supply side of the bill, not giving utility companies more opportunities to profit.

Please note the two addendums to this testimony. Document 1 is testimony from Maria Sears. She is a Baltimore resident who Brittany Baker, our Maryland Director, has been working with for 7 months to help her navigate signing up for utility assistance. Document 2 is testimony from Councilmember Mark Conway, District 4 Baltimore City, who was eager to engage on this issue.

I request an unfavorable report of HB1561.

³https://opc.maryland.gov/Portals/0/Files/Bills/2026/House/Briefing%20for%20the%20Environment%20and%20Transportation%20Committee%201-20-26%20clear%20graphs.pdf?ver=s88g-db2NYD6X8u42ag_sA%3D%3D

⁴<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/wind-and-solar-energy-are-cheaper-than-electricity-from-fossil-fuel-plants/>

Maria Spears
District 41 Resident
4000 Ayrdale Ave, Baltimore Md 21215

**HB 1561 - Electricity Generation and Storage- Investor-Owned Electric Companies and
Front -of the meter storage (Affordable Energy Act)**

Environment and Transportation

Unfavorable

March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Committee Members,

I am Maria Spears, a District 41 resident and I am testifying unfavorably to the idea of my utilities bills going up any further due to BGE making money off ratepayers. There are 8 people in my household, 4 adults and 4 children aged 10, 8, 5, and 3. I am the head of the household and I am an advocate for myself and the women and children in my community.

Just recently in November of 2025, me and my family almost lost our housing voucher due to our utilities being shut off. I had 30 days to come up with \$2,000 in order to have services back on. I got my balance down to .01 in December only for me to have another outstanding balance of \$1,900 in January. It seems as if I was charged over 1,000 for one month.

I haven't even begun to breathe from the weight that my BGE bill has put on me. BGE has never been helpful. Budget billing really only makes you owe the actual balance which is always expensive and they do not give a lot of solutions when you call the call center.

For these reasons, I don't think BGE should get more privileges of additional charges to put on utility bills.

Sincerely,
Maria

Testimony of Councilman Mark Conway

Baltimore City Council – Fourth District

HB1561 – Position: Unfavorable

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 1561. My name is Mark Conway, and I serve as the Baltimore City Councilman for the Fourth District.

I am writing today to express serious concerns about the potential impact of this legislation on Maryland ratepayers, especially those in Baltimore City and on the Eastern Shore. Residents in these areas already experience some of the highest energy burdens in the state. Many families are struggling to keep up with rising utility costs, often forced to choose between paying their energy bills and meeting other basic needs.

Unfortunately, Baltimore Gas and Electric's recent track record does not inspire confidence that expanding new mechanisms tied to utility investment will benefit ratepayers. Through initiatives such as Operation Pipeline and a series of local transmission projects, BGE has advanced infrastructure proposals that ultimately translate into higher customer rates. While reliability investments are important, they should not become a vehicle for repeatedly increasing costs for residents who are already under significant financial pressure.

At the same time, BGE's operational performance has raised additional concerns. The Public Service Commission recently found the company's call center operations to be performing so poorly that it suspended BGE's authority to conduct utility shut-offs until after April 1st. When residents cannot reliably reach their utility provider to resolve billing issues or access assistance programs, it undermines public trust and places vulnerable households at greater risk.

Maryland residents deserve a utility partner that prioritizes affordability, accountability, and reliable service. Until stronger protections are in place for ratepayers, it would be premature to expand new pathways that could further increase costs for Maryland families.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to give HB1561 an unfavorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark Conway

Councilman, Baltimore City Council – Fourth District

Chair, Public Safety Committee

Baltimore City Hall

100 N. Holliday Street

Baltimore, MD 21202