



**TESTIMONY FOR HB1253**  
**Gas Companies - Infrastructure Investments - Cost Recovery and Customer**  
**Notification (Break STRIDE Act)**

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Behler

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1253 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The STRIDE law of 2013 provided gas utilities with a financial incentive to replace gas pipes and equipment. But nothing in the law required that utilities target leaks, prioritize safety, or be cost effective in their work. The result has been excessive spending and profits for the utilities, leading to massive gas delivery rate hikes without commensurate safety improvements. Maryland gas utilities have already spent over two billion dollars to replace gas pipes and equipment.

Despite the state trying to reign in the utilities by passing more stringent requirements for gas pipeline spending, not much has changed, and the utilities are spending the same excessive amounts to fix pipes that don't need fixing. We clearly need to smack the utilities over the head to get them to stop wasting our money.

This bill, if enacted, would protect rate payers by -

- Repealing the STRIDE law
- Requiring gas utilities to prioritize the safety of the gas system for all gas pipeline spending;
- Requiring gas system spending to be cost effective and include analysis of alternatives to replacement including repair, relining, and non-pipeline alternatives
- Requiring gas utilities to demonstrate spending is just and prudent before charging customers by prohibiting forecasted ratemaking and advanced recovery for gas pipeline replacements.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.