DATE: 04 MARCH 2026

TESTIMONY FOR HB1, ENERGY CUSTOMER CHOICE (NO CHOICE)

BY: LINDA KRETER, CONSTITUENT, SEVERNA PARK MD

RE: REQUEST TO OPEN CUSTOMER CHOICE AND STOP THE MONOPOLY TO LOWER COST

Good afternoon,

I'm a constituent/resident in Severna Park and deeply concerned over the lack of Customer Choice in Maryland. I am writing in support of de-monopolizing the BGE complex since there is zero option for alternative providers. I currently hold a Constellation Electric contract that expires in two months; my gas contract runs another year.

I recently received an email from BGE stating that I have a "right" to Customer Choice in Maryland. First I called Constellation to confirm they were unable to renew my contract due to "legislation filed in Maryland". I am unable to renew. I then spoke with BGE, and then escalated it to a supervisor - as you're already aware, there are NO third-party suppliers to select. BGE's supervisor was surprised after she was kind enough to look up who could supply me, and then dead silence: no options at all, though we have "rights".

Following this set of three phone calls, I called the Maryland Public Service Commission, and spoke with someone from the Consumer Affairs Committee. Once again, I shared the story on the monopoly of BGE, the high cost of energy (both gas and electric), and that Customer Choice does NOT exist in Maryland. Energy costs in Maryland are high enough, but when power plants are closed and LNG is not pursued, nor is nuclear power in reach, customers must make difficult choices. Importing our energy from other states is a poor idea, as is the unaffordable Green Options (which are NOT green). I keep my thermostat at 64 degrees - my bill this month (WITH the Constellation contract till May) is nearly $600. There are countless mystery fees on the BGE bill, and the cost of energy delivery outstrips my usage considerably.

No matter how low we set our thermostat, there's only so much we can do to reduce our utility bill. This month is outrageous, and allowing for third party retailers will increase market competition. Nearly $600 to help keep these prices down. I urge a favorable vote on HB974, the Freedom From Monopolies Act, to address this lack of Customer Choice. How is this a choice at all, let alone a "right" in Maryland?

Thank you for any assistance or direction you may provide,

Linda Kreter
122 Severn River Rd
Severna Park, MD 21146