

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment & Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB958 - Natural Gas – Connection and Line Extension – Discounts and Payment Plans

The Allegany County Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than 330 member businesses and organizations in Allegany County Maryland, supports House Bill 958. This legislation prevents the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) from prohibiting natural gas utilities providing line extension allowances to assist new customers in connecting to the natural gas system in Maryland.

In 2025, the PSC proposed such a regulation to prohibit such assistance. The proposed prohibition by the PSC will require new gas utility customers in Maryland to bear the entire up-front cost of extending natural gas service to them.

For many years, Maryland gas utilities have used cost-effective and long-standing policies to help extend service to new homes, businesses, and communities which is a critical part of economic development in Allegany County and Maryland. These policies are vitally important in communities where the up-front cost of natural gas infrastructure would create economic barriers putting energy choice and access out of reach for consumers.

Under existing policy, the costs of extending natural gas infrastructure are shared among customers, making new connections to the natural gas system achievable for businesses and homeowners. The proposed regulation from the PSC would require individual customers to pay the full cost up front, making access to natural gas unaffordable for many in Maryland.

Eliminating this long-standing approach as the PSC has proposed significantly impacts housing affordability, local economic development, and energy choice across the state. Affordability is a major concern for Maryland businesses and families. This new policy risks making basic energy access more costly and less attainable.

Natural gas has been and continues to be a vital energy source for Allegany County and Maryland businesses. The Chamber strongly supports the continued use of and affordable access to natural gas in our county and in the state of Maryland.

The Chamber respectfully urges the Maryland General Assembly to preserve the existing line extension framework currently in place in Maryland to maintain affordability and reliability. Allowing energy choice and affordable access to all available energy services is critical to protecting Maryland's economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and we respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 958.

Sincerely,



Juli McCoy
President & CEO
Allegany County Chamber of Commerce

cc: Western Maryland Delegation