



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

Position: Favorable

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members of the Committee

Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on HB1253, which would save ratepayers on their gas bills by repealing the STRIDE law and reducing the ways utility companies can force gas infrastructure spending onto consumers.

As the members of this committee are painfully aware, energy rates have risen dramatically in recent years due to a variety of factors. Thousands of Marylanders each year face shutoff notices due to nonpayment, while many others are forced to juggle multi-hundred-dollar utility bills alongside the ever-increasing costs of rent, groceries, and other necessities. In fact, when Economic Action Maryland Fund surveyed our members and other stakeholders this winter, 63% stated utility bills were their primary concern.

STRIDE has incentivized excessive utility spending on new gas lines, at significant ratepayer expense. Because STRIDE ensures a higher rate of return on new infrastructure, companies are not prioritizing safety and replacement, but instead pursuing projects that maximize company profits. As Maryland PIRG analysis has shown, customers are already expected to repay over \$41 billion to pay companies back for less than \$8 billion in spending, the difference being interest and company profits.

HB1253 would repeal these perverse incentives and rein in the expenses that can be pushed onto ratepayers. The bill requires companies to prioritize safety and enacts guardrails to protect consumers through cost-effectiveness analysis. This bill builds on the Ratepayer Protection Act passed in 2025 with necessary clarification and additional protections. There have been implementation delays from both the utility companies and the Public Service Commission related to that important consumer protection legislation, and this bill is necessary to ensure it is fully and appropriately implemented.

Excess gas capital spending is driving up utility bills, and this bill is an important tool to rein in those expenses and protect consumers. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB1253.

Sincerely, Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

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