



**Testimony of  
GERARD KEEGAN  
CTIA**

**In Opposition to  
House Bill 1037**

**Before the  
Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee**

**March 3, 2026**

On behalf of CTIA<sup>®</sup>, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I am here in opposition to House Bill 1037 because it is unnecessary as it fails to recognize the hypercompetitive mobile broadband marketplace that delivers benefits to wireless consumers. The Maryland General Assembly made the prescient decision in 1996 to preempt the Public Service Commission from regulating cellular providers.<sup>1</sup> That decision helped usher in a period of intense wireless competition and growth that has increased consumer choice, lowered wireless prices, introduced new and innovative products and services, and fueled the success story that is the U.S. wireless industry. HB 1037 threatens those benefits.

Maryland consumers and businesses have long benefited from intense wireless competition due to the current national regulatory framework that makes sense for an inherently mobile, competitive, and interstate service like wireless. The result is that my member companies work aggressively to expand coverage and promote deployment and

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<sup>1</sup> MD Code Public Utilities Ann. § 1-101(l)(2).



reliability to meet ever-growing demand. In 2024, the wireless industry invested \$29 billion in private funding to improve connectivity for consumers and has invested more than \$219 billion since 2018. This investment also fuels economic growth in Maryland, where the wireless industry supports more than 96,000 jobs and generates \$10.2 billion in GDP growth each year.<sup>2</sup>

The current national regulatory framework for wireless services is also unleashing substantial consumer benefits. This includes:

- **Lower Prices:** In the past year, wireless prices are down 5%, and since 2010, the price of unlimited wireless plans has been cut almost 70%, adjusted for inflation, while the price per MB of mobile data has dropped 99%.<sup>3</sup>
- **Faster Speeds:** While consumers pay less, wireless networks are carrying more data at faster speeds than ever before.<sup>4</sup> Wireless speeds are up over 117 times since 2010.<sup>5</sup>
- **Consumer Choice:** In 2025, 5G fixed wireless access added nearly four million new subscribers, representing 99% of all new broadband subscriptions.
- **Record Demand:** Consumers used a record 132 trillion megabytes of mobile data last year, fueled by a historic 32 trillion MB year-over-year increase, the single largest jump in U.S. wireless history.

Despite all the evidence that the wireless industry is a huge consumer success story, HB 1037 would undermine the uniform national regulatory framework that wireless providers operate under today by proposing prescriptive, state-specific utility-style regulations. The bill

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ctia.org/the-wireless-industry/map/4g>

<sup>3</sup> U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

<sup>4</sup> See Smarter and More Efficient at 3, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> CTIA, *The Wireless Industry: An American Success Story*, <https://www.ctia.org/the-wireless-industry/wireless-industry> (last visited Feb. 26, 2026).



would charge the Maryland Public Service Commission to “adopt regulations to implement effective oversight of the quality, reliability, and resilience of broadband service,” including mobile wireless service. This is the same kind of mandate that the Public Service Commission has to regulate monopoly public utilities like water and power companies. However, unlike monopoly utilities, mobile wireless providers operate in an intensely competitive environment. Nearly all Americans can choose from three or more wireless providers, most wireless consumers are on month-to-month contracts, and federal law guarantees that wireless consumers can keep their telephone numbers when they switch. As such, wireless consumers have significant mobility and choice. In fact, between 9 and 34 percent of wireless consumers change providers every year.

Additionally, research shows that imposing public-utility-style regulations on wireless service will harm Maryland consumers. A January 2025 study from Northeastern University and Advanced Analytical Consulting Group observes that in Maryland between 2012 and 2022, electricity rates increased 13% and water rates increased 88% while wireless rates decreased 44%.<sup>6</sup> The report concludes that imposing a regulatory framework on wireless like the regulatory framework that governs electric and water utilities “will likely deter investment, constrain wireless broadband innovation and lead to rising prices, ultimately harming consumers.”

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<sup>6</sup> Advanced Analytical Consulting Group and Northeastern University, State Price Regulation of Wireless Services, January 2025.



Further, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has long recognized that the internet is an inherently interstate network, not amenable to state-specific regulation. The bill’s assertion of state authority to regulate broadband internet service is inconsistent with the longstanding view that such service is appropriately governed by a single federal regime rather than a patchwork state laws of the sort that applies to traditional landline telephone service (let alone electricity or water service) – and this is true no matter what kind of network is used to provide the broadband internet service (wired or wireless).

Regarding wireless service in particular, federal law limits state regulation of mobile services. Section 332(c)(3)(A) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, provides that “no State or local government shall have any authority to regulate the entry of, or the rates charged by any commercial mobile service or any private mobile service.”<sup>7</sup> “Private mobile service” encompasses mobile broadband. Courts have held that state laws that directly regulate the construction or quality of wireless networks constitute regulation of “market entry” or “rates” and, therefore, are preempted by federal law.<sup>8</sup>

Marylanders have benefited enormously from wireless competition, which is based on a national regulatory framework for mobile broadband that House Bill 1037 would reverse. Even aside from competition, though, the bill’s prescriptive regulatory approach is unnecessary because wireless providers already have committed to CTIA’s “Consumer Code

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<sup>7</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 332(c)(3)(A).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *Johnson v. American Towers, LLC*, 781 F.3d 693, 706 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2015).



for Wireless Service.” Adopted in 2003, the Code is periodically reviewed to ensure it reflects the industry’s innovations and consumer needs and expectations. Signatories to the Code have committed to helping consumers make informed choices when selecting their wireless service, and to fulfill key obligations contemplated by House Bill 1037. For example, wireless providers agree to “disclose to consumers at point of sale and on their web sites,” information regarding coverage areas, any activation or initiation fees, monthly charges, the amount of voice, messaging, and data allowances under a particular plan, any material prohibitions or network management practices relating to wireless broadband service, late fees, termination fees, and other matters.

In closing, the national wireless regulatory framework has created a robustly competitive market that benefits Marylanders with faster, more robust wireless services at lower prices, local investment, and well-paid jobs. Attempting to shoehorn state utility-style regulation onto wireless or adopting onerous policies that ignore the competitive, national market for wireless services would only constrain wireless broadband innovation, deter investment, and lead to rising prices—all poor outcomes for Maryland consumers.

For these reasons, CTIA respectfully opposes House Bill 1037 and requests an unfavorable report.