

HB0723_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON HB#0723 – FAVORABLE

Electric Companies - Cost Containment Plans - Requirement (Securing Affordable, Valuable Investments in Next Generation Grid Solutions (SAVINGS) Act)

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0723, Electric Companies - Cost Containment Plans - Requirement (Securing Affordable, Valuable Investments in Next Generation Grid Solutions (SAVINGS) Act)

Maryland urgently needs to control the rapid and destabilizing increase in utility bills within Maryland. As documented by Earthjustice: ¹

Maryland residents are facing an affordability crisis. Utility bills are rising as the cost-of-living increases, straining already stretched households and businesses. The gas rates of BGE and Columbia Gas have increased significantly since 2010, with BGE's rates tripling during that period and Columbia Gas rates increasing more than three times the inflation rate. Electric rates for Maryland's Exelon utilities have also increased above inflation rates. Unfortunately, this problem isn't going to get better soon. According to BGE, Marylanders should expect to see another combined increase for gas and electric service of over 12% by June 2025 — this will look like an additional \$26 on a \$210 residential bill.

This bill is an important step Maryland, and the Public Service Commission, can take in this affordability crisis. It accomplishes this by requiring electric companies to submit to the Public Service Commission cost containment plans for electric distribution and transmission system planning on or before January 1, 2027, and every 3 years thereafter; requiring the plans to combine to reduce peak electric system loads in a certain manner; and requiring electric companies to submit certain progress reports on the implementation of the plan.

This bill creates more transparency on decisions being made by electric companies and how they will manage their distribution and transmission systems.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass HB0723.

¹ <https://earthjustice.org/experts/susan-stevens-miller/its-time-for-the-maryland-legislature-to-seize-the-moment-lower-energy-bills>