

# ENFORCE THE RATEPAYER PROTECTION ACT: BREAK STRIDE

To protect gas customers from excessive utility bills and improve pipeline safety.

Del. Dylan Behler: HB1253

## Background

Leaks from gas pipes put our communities at risk and emit toxic pollution that harms our health and planet.

Gas utilities are legally required to maintain the safety of the gas system regardless of financial incentive.

The STRIDE law of 2013 provided gas utilities with a financial incentive to replace gas pipes and equipment. But nothing in the law required that utilities target leaks, prioritize safety, or be cost effective in their work.

The result has been excessive spending and profits for the utilities, leading to massive gas delivery rate hikes without commensurate safety improvements.

Maryland gas utilities have already spent over two billion dollars to replace gas pipes and equipment.

PROJECTED SPENDING  
CUSTOMER COST



\$7.9 billion



\$41.5 billion

Without intervention, Maryland gas utilities are expected to spend nearly \$8 billion on STRIDE related projects and charge customers a projected \$41.5 billion to pay it back, driven in large part by utility profits.

## The Ratepayer Protection Act

In 2025 Governor Moore signed a new law to direct gas pipeline spending to prioritize safety and be cost effective. The law went into effect June 1st and requires gas utilities to consider alternatives to replacement including repair, relining, and non-pipeline alternatives.

But Washington Gas and BGE are already arguing they don't have to change their plans and can continue with business as usual, and the PSC has yet to intervene. We need the legislature to protect gas customers from excessive utility bills and improve pipeline safety.

A pipe replacement program that properly prioritizes leaks would cost less, meaning smaller bill increases, while actually making us safer.

### The Break STRIDE Act will follow through on the promise of the Ratepayer Protection Act by:

- Repealing the STRIDE law;
- Requiring gas utilities to prioritize the safety of the gas system for all gas pipeline spending;
- Requiring gas system spending to be cost effective and include analysis of alternatives to replacement including repair, relining, and non-pipeline alternatives; and,
- Requiring gas utilities to demonstrate spending is just and prudent before charging customers by prohibiting forecasted ratemaking and advanced recovery for gas pipeline replacements.

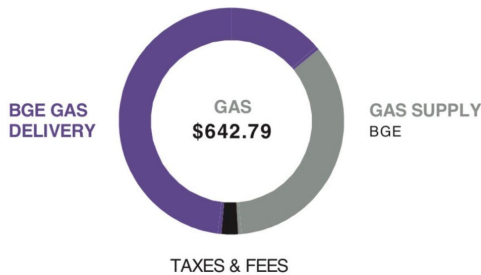


### BGE's Operation Pipeline

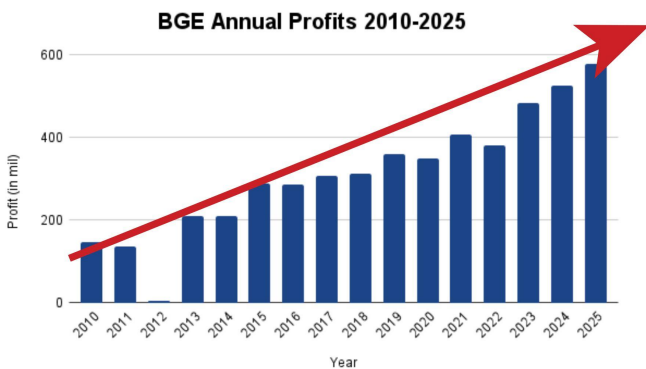
BGE has spent \$1.4 billion on "Operation Pipeline," its gas pipeline replacement program. If BGE completes its proposed \$4 billion in gas pipeline spending it could cost customers \$19.5 billion to pay back.

When gas utilities install new pipes, customers pay it back over the full projected lifetime of the equipment, like a mortgage or high interest credit card, with compounding interest. It drives up our bills for decades to come.

Due in large part to massive STRIDE spending BGE gas customers have seen their delivery rates triple since 2010. Today, BGE gas customers pay BGE nearly \$2 in delivery charges for every \$1 they spend on gas to heat their home.



At the same time, BGE's profits have nearly quadrupled from \$147 million in 2010 to \$578 million in 2025.



### Safety does not come first

Maryland PIRG's report [Fast-Tracked and Flawed](#) found that BGE is not adequately prioritizing safety in Operation Pipeline, and that the program may actually be slowing the work to repair or replace the most at-risk pipes.

Originally, the STRIDE law had no requirements on safety. That changed in 2025. But BGE is continuing the works without making any changes.

With Operation Pipeline, BGE has chosen to prioritize costly pressure conversions. The pressure conversion strategy requires the replacement of non-at risk materials. In 2025, 15% of the mains and more than 40% of the service lines being replaced were lower risk materials like plastic. The company's 2026 plan is much the same.

BGE is also under [active investigation at the PSC](#) for failures of the gas pipeline safety inspection program.

### A canary in the coal mine

There's still time to protect Washington Gas customers from the worst of these massive rate hikes. But without intervention, all Maryland gas customers' rates will continue to rise, making home heating with gas increasingly unaffordable.

WGL just filed for a \$82.5 million rate hike. And according to OPC, If WGL completes its proposed \$3.9 billion in gas pipeline spending it could cost customers \$22 billion to pay back.