



TESTIMONY FOR HB0540
Investor-Owned Electric, Gas, and Gas and Electric Companies - Utility Rate Changes (Public Service Company Transparency Act)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lehman

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0540 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The increases that Marylanders are seeing on their utility bills are nothing short of shocking. It seems as though utility companies are raising their prices with impunity and no one is minding the store. The Public Service Commission is SUPPOSED to manage utility rates and ensure that just this kind of thing doesn't happen, yet rate payers find out that decisions have been made with no transparency or input at all.

This bill would prohibit any Investor-Owned gas, electric, or gas and electric Public Service Company from initiating any proceeding that could lead to a rate change unless It notifies customers, through a bill insert or separate e-mail:

- that the public service company is initiating a proceeding that may lead to a rate change
- the relevant procedural dates
- where to find information regarding the rate change on the commission's website

It also must prepare and publishes a 10-year rate trend report that:

- includes a visual graphic depicting the 10-year rate change trend, including an indication of the effective date of the rate change and increment by which the rate changed
- identifies costs associated with transmission, distribution, and standard-offer or commodity service; and accounts for all customer bill line items, including rate riders

Our members think that it is shameful that we have to regulate companies in this way so they provide basic transparency and accountability to their customers.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.