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**LOCAL 419 THE UTILITY WORKERS OF
AMERICA AFL-CIO CUMBERLAND MD**



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CUMBERLAND MD 21502

**FAVORABLE - House Bill 958
Natural Gas – Connection and Line Extension – Discounts and Payment Plans
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 27, 2026**

The Utilities Workers Union Local 419 of Maryland (Local 419) supports House Bill 958 which would prohibit the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) from adopting or enforcing a regulation or order that prohibits a public service company from offering a discount or payment plan for the connection or extension of a natural gas line to a customer's property. This legislation is in response to draft regulations published in 2025 by the PSC requiring new gas utility customers to bear the full upfront cost of extending natural gas service to them.

The PSC's proposed regulations are a significant departure from long-standing policies and cost-effective practices that have ensured access to reliable and affordable natural gas service for thousands of Maryland households and businesses for decades.

The existing line-extension framework has assisted in responsible economic development, supported affordable housing, and provided consumer choice and cost stability in Maryland. Current policies have been vitally important in communities where the up-front cost of natural gas infrastructure would otherwise put energy access and choice out of reach for consumers. It has spurred economic development and helped build new housing with affordable costs.

Under existing Maryland policy, like line-extension policies throughout the United States, the costs of extending natural gas infrastructure are shared among customers, making new connections feasible for businesses and homeowners alike. The PSC's proposed regulation would instead require Marylanders to pay the full cost upfront, making access to natural gas financially out of reach for many and increasing housing costs, commercial building costs and industrial facility costs.

The PSC's proposed change will adversely affect homebuilders, homeowners, and developers in Maryland who depend on access to affordable energy like natural gas. Natural gas is a vital component of Maryland's energy mix and provides reliable service at an affordable price, especially during Maryland winters where periods of high demand occur.

Local 419 respectfully urges the Maryland General Assembly to preserve the existing line-extension framework through passage of House Bill 958. The existing line-extension framework will maintain affordability for Marylanders and continue to provide energy choice throughout the state.



Our neighboring states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Delaware permit gas utilities to provide line extension assistance and Maryland must not place itself at a competitive disadvantage in building new housing or recruiting new businesses.

Thank you for your consideration of Local 419's comments and we urge a favorable report on House Bill 958.

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