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HB 974 – Electricity and Gas – Retail Supply (Freedom From Monopolies Act)
Environment and Transportation Committee
March 6, 2026
UNFAVORABLE

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. My name is Sara Westrick, and I am the Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland.

AARP Maryland represents more than 850,000 members across the state, making it one of the largest membership-based organizations advocating for older Marylanders. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people to live their best lives as they age. Our work focuses on issues that matter most to older adults and their families, including affordable utilities and financial security. Nationally, AARP offices in all deregulated states have been active participants in leveling the regulatory playing field so that residents do not pay higher power bills.

We respectfully offer this unfavorable testimony on **HB 974**, legislation that would dismantle essential consumer protections, weaken regulatory oversight, and expose Maryland households to greater financial and marketplace risk.

HB 974 is presented as a modernization of Maryland's retail energy framework. In practice, it would **erase** many of the safeguards the General Assembly has deliberately put in place over the last decade to protect residents from predatory marketing, misleading sales tactics, and inflated utility bills. This bill does not expand freedom or choice; it strips away transparency and accountability at the precise moment when Marylanders need them most.

On behalf of Maryland ratepayers, AARP Maryland urges the Committee to issue an **unfavorable** report on HB 974.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick, AARP Maryland Advocacy Director, at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.

