



One Park Place | Suite 475 | Annapolis, MD 21401-3475
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-837-0269
aarp.org/md | md@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpm
facebook.com/aarpm

**HB 642 - Electric Companies – Service Outages and Rate Increases –
Report on Customer Impact
Environment and Transportation Committee
February 17, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. My name is Laurel Peltier, and I am a proud member of AARP Maryland and a resident of Baltimore County. 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 appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 642. We thank Delegates Long, Allen, Alston, Amprey, Behler, Ivey, Kaufman, Palakovich Carr, and Woods for introducing this legislation on behalf of Maryland ratepayers.

AARP is 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, financial security, health care access, and protection from financial exploitation.

HB 642 improves transparency and accountability in Maryland's electric system by requiring utilities to report detailed data on which communities are most affected by service outages and rate increases. The bill ensures regulators, lawmakers, and the public have the information needed to address inequities in electric reliability and affordability.

Outages and rate increases hit some communities harder than others. Low-income neighborhoods, rural areas, and communities of color often experience longer outages and face higher energy burdens. Without detailed geographic and demographic data, these disparities remain hidden and unaddressed.

Utilities report some outage metrics, but not who is impacted or where repeated or prolonged outages occur. HB 642 closes this gap by requiring standardized, annual reporting directly to the Public Service Commission (PSC). This transparency will support better regulatory decisions in the future. Better data means better policy. This is particularly important given the unusual times Maryland's older adults are experiencing, as many find the current electricity and gas rates truly unaffordable. The health and safety of our seniors have been negatively affected as they scramble to pay for utilities to avoid terminations and keep the power on.

HB 642 helps protect Maryland ratepayers and strengthens oversight of utility performance. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support HB 642.

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