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**HB 540 - Investor-Owned Electric, Gas, and Gas and Electric Companies – Utility Rate Changes ( Public Service Company Transparency Act)  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 10, 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 HB540. We thank Delegate Lehman 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 540 offers utility bill disclosure suggestions to help 2.3 million residents more easily find the key information they need to manage their energy utilities, view historical supply and delivery rates, learn about upcoming rate increases or decreases, and participate in state proceedings.

Unlike most consumer goods, where Americans seem to know prices and trends intimately, that isn't the case with energy utilities. Utility bills can be confusing with strange formats and energy acronyms (kWh, KH, kilowatt hour, therms, numbers without dollar signs). We understand that utility billing is a complicated process with limitations for printable messages. We think Delegate Lehman's request for better, consistent, clear, statewide, consumer-friendly, accurate, and understandable utility rate information and proceedings is needed.

These are unusual times for Maryland's older adults, as many find the current electricity and gas rates truly unaffordable. The health and safety of our seniors living has been negatively impacted as they scramble to find the funds to pay for their utilities to avoid terminations and keep the power on. AARP Maryland thinks it's reasonable to require the utilities' Board of Directors to adopt company-wide policies that judiciously spend rate payers' funds on the above business activities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support HB 540.

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

