



**HB509: Campaign Finance -
Contributions by Gas and Electric Utility Companies - Prohibition**

Position: Favorable

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members of the Committee

Chair Wells and members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on HB509, which would prohibit utility companies doing business in the state from making campaign donations to elected officials or other campaign accounts.

As a fully regulated industry, utility companies in Maryland have a unique relationship to the legislature. Banning campaign contributions ensures that there is public confidence that all decisions are being made in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner.

There is precedence for this prohibition. When the state legalized casinos, which are similarly a highly regulated industry in the state, the enabling legislation prohibited those entities from making campaign donations.

As the members of this committee are painfully aware, energy rates have risen dramatically in recent years due to a variety of factors. Thousands of Marylanders each year face shutoff notices due to nonpayment, while many others are forced to juggle multi-hundred-dollar utility bills alongside the ever-increasing costs of rent, groceries, and other necessities. In fact, when Economic Action Maryland Fund surveyed our members and other stakeholders this winter, 63% stated utility bills were their primary concern.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB509.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

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