



[HoCoClimateAction.org](http://HoCoClimateAction.org)  
Howard County, Maryland

**Testimony:** [HB0509](#) – Contributions by Gas and Electric Utility Companies - Prohibition  
**Hearing Date:** Feb. 11, 2026  
**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Vogel  
**Committee:** Government, Labor, and Elections  
**Submitting:** Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action  
**Position:** Favorable

Dear Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr and Committee Members,

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#). Our organization works with residents and ally organizations to promote a safe climate and clean energy future. Specifically, we have worked extensively on building electrification to help Maryland achieve its ambitious climate goals, including net-zero emissions.

As Maryland families continue to be burdened by ever increasing utility rates, HoCo Climate Action supports legislation that increases transparency and protects ratepayers. We urge you to vote favorably on [HB0509 – Campaign Finance - Contributions by Gas and Electric Utility Companies - Prohibition](#), which would prohibit utilities from making campaign contributions to a candidate for state office in Maryland or any other campaign finance entity organized in support of a candidate.

This bill would address transparency challenges and worrisome political influence by gas and electric investor-owned companies by prohibiting campaign contributions. We know that Maryland gas and electric utilities spend big to influence our state lawmakers and other elected officials. In a March 2024 report, [POLITICS OF POWER Gas and Electric Utilities' Political Spending in Maryland](#), MD Public Interest Research Foundation documented that in 2023 alone Maryland utilities spent \$2.2 million on lobbying, particularly relating to energy, the environment, decarbonization, decommissioning of power plants, and the implementation of our state's climate goals.

We also know that Maryland gas and electric utilities spend lavishly to wine and dine lawmakers, especially on the committees that consider legislation affecting those companies. In fact, the Washington Post reported ([Lobbyists spend big on 'committee dinners' with Maryland lawmakers](#) Dec. 30, 2025) that in 2025 alone, BGE, Constellation, Washington Gas, and Pepco spent \$49,000 on committee dinners.

We need to avoid the problems in Virginia with Dominion Power and their outsized political influence to increase its profits at the expense of Virginia families, businesses and the environment as laid out at [Clean Virginia](#). It is the right policy, but especially now, at a time that gas and electric rates are skyrocketing. Maryland ratepayers and voters need to trust that it is their pocketbooks that are driving decisions in Annapolis and not the political fortunes of Maryland lawmakers.

For these reasons, we support **HB0509** and recommend a **favorable** report.

Howard County Climate Action  
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