



February 17, 2026

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

**SB 482 – Criminal Law – Interference With Critical Infrastructure or a Public Safety Answering Point
Statement in Support**

Chesapeake Utilities of Maryland, Inc. (“Chesapeake”) provides natural gas local distribution service to approximately 34,000 customers across Maryland's Eastern Shore (including Cecil, Dorchester, Caroline, Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties). Chesapeake respectfully **SUPPORTS** SB 482, legislation that significantly strengthens Maryland’s criminal protections for critical infrastructure—including the essential natural gas systems that power homes, businesses, and public institutions statewide.

SB 482 fortifies existing computer-crime statutes, ensuring that any intentional, unauthorized attempt to impair or disrupt critical infrastructure or public safety answering points (PSAPs) is met with the gravity it warrants. By elevating these offenses to felonies, the bill imposes penalties of up to 10 years’ imprisonment and a \$50,000 fine for unauthorized digital access that denies rightful users or disrupts critical operations.

SB 482 defines “**critical infrastructure**” as systems and assets—physical or virtual—whose disruption could severely impact public safety, health, economic security, transportation, or utilities. Natural gas systems are a cornerstone of this definition, as our infrastructure ensures heating reliability, industrial productivity, emergency response capability, and essential quality-of-life services for millions of Marylanders.

With cyber threats growing in both frequency and sophistication, utilities are increasingly vulnerable to unauthorized access to critical operational technology, such as pipeline monitoring, pressure control, and dispatching systems. While utilities make substantial investments in cybersecurity, robust state-level deterrence is an indispensable layer of defense. SB 482 ensures that those who deliberately target utility systems are held accountable under strong criminal statutes—an enhanced deterrent that is crucial for safeguarding reliability and public trust.

SB 482 is a vital **modernization** of Maryland’s criminal code, aligning with federal cybersecurity priorities, advancing protection of critical infrastructure, and ensuring that those who intentionally threaten essential services are met with firm, appropriate consequences.

On behalf of Chesapeake and our thousands of dedicated employees and their families—who contribute daily to the communities where they live, work, and serve—we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 482.

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation
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