

HOUSE BILL 998

C5

2lr1961
CF SB 905

By: **Delegate Carey**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2022

Assigned to: Economic Matters

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 10, 2022

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Human Services – Silver Energy Savers Program and Energy Assistance Fund**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs to establish a Silver
4 Energy Savers Program to provide bill assistance to eligible energy customers who
5 are at least a certain age; requiring the Office to ~~approve a third-party supplier~~ enter
6 into a contract with 2-1-1 Maryland to provide assistance with the Program;
7 requiring ~~the Office~~ 2-1-1 Maryland to designate four centers in certain regions of
8 the State to administer the Program; requiring the Office to perform certain duties
9 to carry out the Program, including establishing a certain communication system,
10 requiring certain local offices to perform certain functions, and authorizing ~~the~~
11 ~~third-party supplier~~ 2-1-1 Maryland to allow telephonic signatures for a certain
12 purpose; establishing the Office of Home Energy Programs Energy Assistance Fund
13 as a special, nonlapsing fund; and generally relating to the Office of Home Energy
14 Programs and bill assistance for eligible energy customers.

15 BY renumbering

16 Article – Human Services

17 Section 5-5A-09

18 to be Section 5-5A-10

19 Annotated Code of Maryland

20 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

22 Article – Human Services

23 Section 5-5A-01(d)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 Annotated Code of Maryland
2 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

3 BY adding to
4 Article – Human Services
5 Section 5–5A–09
6 Annotated Code of Maryland
7 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

8 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
9 That Section(s) 5–5A–09 of Article – Human Services of the Annotated Code of Maryland
10 be renumbered to be Section(s) 5–5A–10.

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
12 as follows:

13 **Article – Human Services**

14 5–5A–01.

15 (d) “Office” means the Office of Home Energy Programs.

16 **5–5A–09.**

17 **(A) IN THIS SECTION, “2–1–1 MARYLAND” MEANS THE MARYLAND**
18 **INFORMATION NETWORK, A 501(C)(3) CORPORATION IN THE STATE.**

19 ~~(A)~~ **(B) THE OFFICE SHALL ESTABLISH A SILVER ENERGY SAVERS**
20 **PROGRAM TO PROVIDE BILL ASSISTANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SECTION TO**
21 **ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS WHO ARE AT LEAST 60 YEARS OLD.**

22 ~~(B)~~ **(C) THE OFFICE SHALL ~~APPROVE A THIRD-PARTY SUPPLIER~~ ENTER**
23 **INTO A CONTRACT WITH 2–1–1 MARYLAND TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE**
24 **SILVER ENERGY SAVERS PROGRAM BY:**

25 **(1) HELPING ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS UNDERSTAND ANY**
26 **FORMS;**

27 **(2) HELPING ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS WITH ANY REQUIRED**
28 **APPLICATION INFORMATION; AND**

29 **(3) TRANSPORTING APPLICATIONS FROM AN ELIGIBLE ENERGY**
30 **CUSTOMER TO A LOCAL OFFICE THROUGH THE PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THE**
31 **THIRD-PARTY SUPPLIER.**

1 ~~(C)~~ (D) ~~THE OFFICE 2-1-1 MARYLAND~~ SHALL DESIGNATE FOUR
2 CENTERS TO ADMINISTER THE SILVER ENERGY SAVERS PROGRAM, INCLUDING:

- 3 (1) ONE LOCATION IN CENTRAL MARYLAND;
- 4 (2) ONE LOCATION ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND;
- 5 (3) ONE LOCATION IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND; AND
- 6 (4) ONE LOCATION IN WESTERN MARYLAND.

7 ~~(D)~~ (E) CENTERS DESIGNATED BY ~~THE OFFICE 2-1-1 MARYLAND~~ UNDER
8 SUBSECTION ~~(C)~~ (D) OF THIS SECTION SHALL:

- 9 (1) ESTABLISH CALL CENTERS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE
10 ENERGY CUSTOMERS;
- 11 (2) ASSIST ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS IN GATHERING THE
12 INFORMATION REQUIRED TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO A LOCAL OFFICE;
- 13 (3) COLLECT DATA FOR EACH ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMER THAT IS
14 PROVIDED ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING THE CUSTOMER'S:

- 15 (I) NAME;
- 16 (II) ADDRESS;
- 17 (III) AGE;
- 18 (IV) TELEPHONE NUMBER; AND
- 19 (V) UTILITY COMPANY; AND
- 20 (4) MAINTAIN WRITTEN RECORDS OF THEIR ACTIONS.

21 ~~(E)~~ (F) THE OFFICE SHALL:

- 22 (1) ESTABLISH A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM BETWEEN LOCAL OFFICES
23 AND ~~THE THIRD PARTY SUPPLIER APPROVED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS~~
24 ~~SECTION 2-1-1 MARYLAND~~ TO ENABLE COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE
25 APPLICATIONS OF ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS, THE GRANTS PROCESS, AND THE
26 REASONS FOR DENIAL OF AN APPLICATION;

1 **(2) REQUIRE LOCAL OFFICES TO:**

2 **(I) PERFORM HOME VISITS TO OBTAIN DOCUMENTS FROM**
3 **ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS WHEN NECESSARY; AND**

4 **(II) ESTABLISH A SYSTEM TO COORDINATE THE TRANSFER OF**
5 **DOCUMENTS TO ~~THE THIRD PARTY SUPPLIER~~ 2-1-1 MARYLAND; AND**

6 **(3) AUTHORIZE ~~THE THIRD PARTY SUPPLIER~~ 2-1-1 MARYLAND TO**
7 **ALLOW TELEPHONIC SIGNATURES FOR ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS IN THE**
8 **SILVER ENERGY SAVERS PROGRAM.**

9 ~~(F)~~ (G) **(1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, “FUND” MEANS THE OFFICE OF**
10 **HOME ENERGY PROGRAMS ENERGY ASSISTANCE FUND.**

11 **(2) THERE IS AN OFFICE OF HOME ENERGY PROGRAMS ENERGY**
12 **ASSISTANCE FUND.**

13 **(3) THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO ADMINISTER THE SILVER**
14 **ENERGY SAVERS PROGRAM.**

15 **(4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.**

16 **(5) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT**
17 **SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.**

18 **(6) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY,**
19 **AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.**

20 **(7) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:**

21 **(I) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE**
22 **FUND; AND**

23 **(II) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED**
24 **FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.**

25 **(8) ~~FOR~~ BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2024, AND EACH FISCAL YEAR**
26 **THEREAFTER, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN**
27 **APPROPRIATION OF \$200,000 TO THE FUND.**

1 **(9) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF**
2 **2-1-1 MARYLAND AND THE SILVER ENERGY SAVERS PROGRAM, INCLUDING**
3 **STAFFING.**

4 **(10) (I) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE**
5 **FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.**

6 **(II) ANY INTEREST EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE**
7 **CREDITED TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE STATE.**

8 **(11) EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND MAY BE MADE ONLY IN**
9 **ACCORDANCE WITH THE STATE BUDGET.**

10 **(12) MONEY EXPENDED FROM THE FUND FOR THE SILVER ENERGY**
11 **SAVERS PROGRAM IS SUPPLEMENTAL TO AND IS NOT INTENDED TO TAKE THE**
12 **PLACE OF FUNDING THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE APPROPRIATED FOR BILL**
13 **ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE ENERGY CUSTOMERS.**

14 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
15 1, 2022.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.