

ROBBYN LEWIS
Legislative District 46
Baltimore City

Health and Government Operations
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 304
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3772 · 301-858-3772
800-492-7122 Ext. 3772
Fax 410-841-3341 · 301-858-3341
Robbyn.Lewis@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 1271

Public Utilities - Homeowner Utility Repair Fund - Establishment

Dear Chair Wilson and Honorable Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

HB1271 will help low and middle-income Maryland residents offset the repair costs of required demolition work on their homes due to regular utility maintenance or upgrades, by creating a Homeowner Utility Repair Fund. The proposed Fund will tap into unused weatherization and energy assistance programs funds.

Utility upgrades are a vital component of ensuring a safe and reliable supply of energy to customers from providers. Unfortunately, there are instances in which utility companies, their contractors, or subcontractors are forced to undertake demolition in a resident's home in order to access the necessary equipment.

Although the utility company pays for the demolition itself, the cost of repairs are often the responsibility of the homeowner. Baltimore City and the surrounding region have an older housing stock and demolition work is more often required to perform utility upgrades. Residents in my district and across the State are reaching out with increasing frequency over the last year as gas meter replacement work is taking place. Low- and middle-income residents are resultantly being hit with high repair costs that they could not have anticipated, and are often unable to afford.

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has already drastically impacted Marylanders' financial security, House Bill 1271 is intended to provide a lifeline by establishing a fund that will help to offset the expense of restoration.

I thank the Committee for your consideration of House Bill 1271, and respectfully request a favorable report.