



## TESTIMONY For SB0542

### Public Safety - Emergency Management - Consumer Protections Against Price Gouging

**Bill Sponsor:** President

**Committee:** Finance

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0542 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Now that we all have experience with being price-gouged and looking on with horror as gas prices soared and fossil fuel companies recorded record profits when people were suffering and dying, it's past time to set boundaries. In every emergency in the past, fossil fuel companies have artificially increased their prices and caused panic and bankruptcy among low- and moderate- income residents, and pocketed billions in earnings.

This bill would prohibit that practice and would also ensure that other providers of essential goods and services would not follow suit. It is a testament to how much people are suffering that we have to declare an emergency, but having companies profit off of that suffering is inexcusable.

We could only ask for jail time as part of the penalties for this kind of greed and apathy towards suffering, but that would be difficult to achieve. So, we will simply applaud the President for bringing this bill forward.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.