



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

**HB1379**  
**Renewable Natural Gas Pilot Program - Establishment**  
**Testimony before House Economic Matters Committee**  
**Hearing March 7, 2024**  
**Position: Unfavorable**

Dear Chair Wilson and Vice-Chair Crosby, and members of the committee, our names are Liz Feighner and Virginia Smith, and we represent [HoCo Climate Action](#), a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization with approximately 1,400 subscribers and [Indivisible Howard County](#) representing 750+ members, respectively. Both organizations are active members of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We strongly urge an **unfavorable report on HB1379**, which authorizes the Department of General Services to enter into a contract to procure renewable 'natural' gas (RNG).

RNG is the new clean coal and a cynical red herring. With RNG, the gas industry can claim to lower carbon emissions while continuing to burn dirty fuels. "[In reality, this is just a greenwashed, cleaner sounding name for biomethane, or processed biogas that can be delivered in pipelines.](#)" The only possible use might be for on-site and hard-to-electrify sectors, such as aviation or long-distance transportation.

As the gas industry faces declines in sales because of efforts to curb climate pollution, the industry is [scrambling to preserve its future](#). The gas industry has embraced RNG as its lifeline. By securing RNG legislation and requirements, it will be able to expand gas infrastructure, [keep customers locked in to gas, and create a new faux "green" business model](#).

RNG is (1) limited in supply and scalability, (2) very costly, (3) detrimental to the environment and air quality, especially for frontline communities, and (4) in some cases, can end up increasing GHG emissions. RNG encourages the continued buildout of leaky gas infrastructure that locks in climate chaos. Research indicates that replacing fossil fuels with RNG is "[not likely to be commercially feasible without large subsidies.](#)"

It is ludicrous to require the Department of General Services to establish an RNG pilot program in order to procure highly expensive renewable "natural" gas (RNG), especially given many other budget demands for the state and taxpayers. It is extremely wasteful to subsidize this false solution when we could be using funds for truly clean energy, such as solar, wind and geothermal.

For these reasons, we urge **an unfavorable report of HB1379**.

Liz Feighner  
Laurel, MD 2072  
[HoCo Climate Action](#)

Virginia Smith  
Columbia, MD 21044  
[Indivisible Howard County](#)