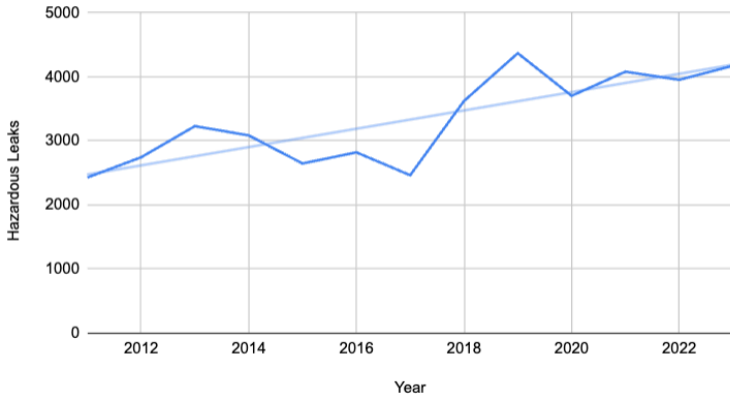


# The Ratepayer Protection Act codifies recommendations from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and is supported by the Maryland Energy Administration and Office of the People’s Counsel.

## BGE hazardous leaks per year 2010-2023



## STRIDE and public safety

Leaks from gas pipes put our communities at risk and emit toxic pollution that harms our health and planet.

Gas utilities are legally required to maintain the safety of their system regardless of financial incentive.

But nothing in the STRIDE law specifies that utilities target leaks, and leaks can often be repaired at much lower costs to customers than replacement.

While fixing leaks should be a priority, STRIDE has not delivered on promises of increased safety.

According to [federal data](#), BGE’s hazardous leaks per year have increased in the last decade, escalating from 2,400 in 2011 to over 4,000 in 2023.

## Environmental concerns

Overspending on new infrastructure doesn’t make sense for our climate goals nor for ratepayers.

Maryland’s [Climate Solutions Now Act](#) directs the state to shift away from fossil fuels to power our homes. While the shift won’t happen overnight, we should be thoughtful about our approach to expensive new gas pipes and equipment.

We can’t afford to waste money on unnecessary upgrades to the gas system, especially when we could be investing that money on cleaner, safer energy to heat our homes.

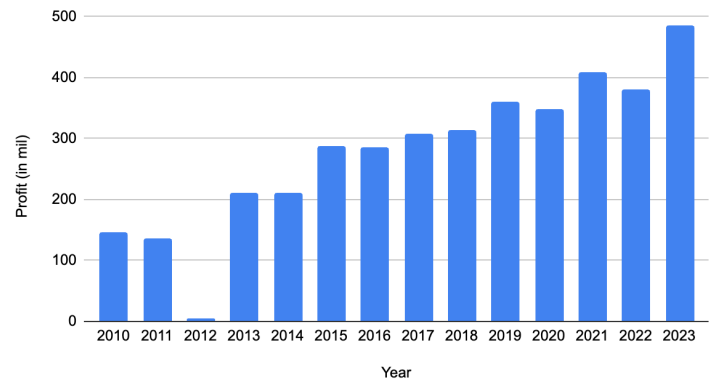
## BGE gas costs 2010-2023



Calculations are based on gas usage of 940 therms per year.

Chart from the Office of the People’s Counsel 2024 report [“Maryland Utilities Rates and Charges.”](#)

## BGE Annual Profits 2010-2023



## Supporting Groups

AIA Maryland \* CASA \* Center for Progressive Reform \* Ceres \* Economic Action Maryland \* Green & Healthy Homes Initiative \* HoCo Climate Action \* Indivisible HoCoMD Environmental Action \* Maryland Energy Advocates Coalition \* Maryland League of Conservation Voters \* Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing \* Maryland PIRG \* Progressive Maryland Third Act Maryland \* Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

This is a turn-off notice.

Issued Date: September 16, 2024  
Account # [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
MD 21239

# The Ratepayer Protection Act: STRIDE REFORM

To protect gas customers from excessive utility bills and improve pipeline safety.

Sen. Mary Washington / Del. Elizabeth Embry HB419

## Background

The STRIDE law of 2013 was passed with the intent of incentivising gas utilities to more proactively fix their aging gas infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the law lacks critical safeguards on spending, exacerbating an existing incentive for the gas utilities to overinvest in new infrastructure. To make matters worse, the law also lacks language requiring spending to prioritize safety.

The result: utilities have spent billions on new gas pipes and equipment, leading to massive rate hikes and utility profits, without commensurate community benefit.

For example, in 2023 BGE spent about \$160 million on its STRIDE plan. After accounting for BGE's profits and interest, that \$160 million will cost customers \$576 million.

**Without intervention, Maryland gas customers are projected to pay \$40 billion for the STRIDE program over the next twenty years, driven in large part by utility profits.**

Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG Senior Advisor  
emily@marylandpirg.org

## Rising gas utility bills

BGE gas customers have seen their delivery rates triple since 2010, due in large part to STRIDE. At the same time, BGE's profits tripled from \$147 million in 2010 to \$485 million in 2023.

There's still time to protect Washington Gas customers from these massive rate hikes. But without intervention, all Maryland gas customers' rates will continue to rise, making home heating increasingly unaffordable.

**A pipe replacement program that properly prioritizes leaks would cost less, meaning smaller bill increases, while actually making us safer.**

The Ratepayer Protection Act gives the Maryland Public Service Commission new tools to ensure that ratepayer dollars are spent responsibly by codifying requirements on safety and cost effectiveness.

## The bill requires gas utilities to:

- Ensure gas infrastructure spending is cost effective;
- Prioritize safety by using modern leak detection technology;
- Use a "fix it first" approach;
- Consider non-pipeline alternatives to gas; and
- Give gas customers 2 years notice before work so they have time to plan.

