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## Maryland PSC to Explore Means to Benefit Limited Income Utility Customers

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The Maryland Public Service Commission is aware that inflation and higher utility rates have caused a strain on many limited income customers and has opened a new proceeding to explore ways that could provide relief.

Through [Public Conference 59](#) (PC59), the Commission is seeking ideas and suggestions on what mechanisms this could entail and is requesting comments from a broad spectrum of interests including utility customers, consumer advocates, elected officials, utilities and social justice organizations. **Comments are due to the Commission by January 31, 2024.** The comments may also address broader eligibility criteria and impacts related to energy affordability.

Under a bill championed in 2021 by State Treasurer Dereck Davis, then-Chair of the House Economic Matters Committee, sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Malcolm Augustine, and enacted by the Maryland General Assembly, electric and gas utilities were authorized to adopt mechanisms to benefit eligible limited-income customers, as approved by the Commission. Potomac Edison, an electric utility in western Maryland, has filed a proposal for consideration. According to the law a limited income mechanism could take the form of a program, tariff provision, credit, rate, rider, or other means to assist an eligible limited income customer to afford a utility service.

At his swearing-in in July of 2023, PSC Chair Frederick H. Hoover echoed Gov. Wes Moore's pledge to 'leave no Marylander behind.' "Maryland is a national leader in the energy transition, and one of the challenges is to assure that it will benefit all of our citizens. Energy affordability is a priority of the Commission and our expectation of the public conference is that it will lead to solutions for Maryland families," said Chair Hoover.

Comments can be E-filed ([webpsc.psc.state.md.us/DMS/E-file](http://webpsc.psc.state.md.us/DMS/E-file)) on the Commission's website or sent by mail to Andrew Johnston, Executive Secretary, Maryland Public Service Commission, William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 St. Paul Street, 16th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. So that they are noted in the proper category, comments should reference 'PC59.'

Once the January 31 deadline is met, replies to comments can be submitted until February 29, after which time the Commission will consider the next steps.

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***About the Public Service Commission:***

*The Maryland Public Service Commission regulates electric and gas utilities and suppliers, telephone companies (land lines), certain water and sewer companies, passenger motor vehicle carriers for hire (sedans, limousines, buses, Uber, Lyft), taxicab companies (in Baltimore City and County, Charles County, Cumberland and Hagerstown) and bay pilot rates.*

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