

## PRESS RELEASE

# Updates on BGE External Regulator Installations

My office has been contacted by affected individuals, concerned constituents, community and association leaders in the 43rd District regarding BGE's installation of external gas regulators in our residential neighborhoods. We have been tracking this issue since the protests began, and continue to monitor the situation. I was alarmed by the June 22nd arrest of the Federal Hill residents protesting to stop BGE from shutting off service for homeowners that had refused the installment of external regulators. Gas shut-offs are a draconian response—and I was relieved that a judge ruled that BGE must turn gas service back on for these residents. The Public Service Commission (PSC) has also issued a statement clarifying that BGE is required to “halt terminations of services” only in billing disputes.

As a member of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, I have been educating myself and researching the Maryland regulatory authority for these gas installations. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration issued an advisory bulletin which stated that gas companies “should evaluate each service installation to determine the appropriate location of the service regulators.” And, Title 49 in the Federal Code also requires all gas regulators to be protected from damage, “including, if installed outside a building, vehicular damage that may be anticipated.”

We have heard concerns from residents about the upheaval from BGE work in neighborhoods on the pipe and regulator replacement. It is my hope the PSC will provide guidance to Baltimoreans if the new regulators are necessary, or if they need to be external in all Baltimore homes. While I have been critical of decisions made by the PSC in the past, I am optimistic that Gov. Moore's appointments will focus on the “P” in the PSC, the public's interests.

Time and time again we see incidents of utility terminations, unexplained projects, escalation to court cases and even arrests resulting from a lack of transparency and grace from BGE when dealing with residents. We would like to provide the opportunity for open and responsive communication between BGE and the communities affected by these installations. Further, I would like to ensure that extreme measures, such as shutoffs and arrests, are not needed in handling this type of situation in the future. Removal of an essential service - home energy - should never be utilized as a punitive measure.

I have been your energy advocate for over a decade. I've observed a lack of transparency between agencies and organizations and the public. Rising rates, control of the Baltimore City Conduit and conduit deal, third-party retail energy suppliers' sales practices and overcharges, and further encroachment on the public's access to energy, are all issues that I will continue to raise. I serve the public and my constituents, not the energy companies. I continue to be disappointed by the actions and responses given by the energy entities meant to serve our state. I understand and share in your frustration, and will do everything I can to create accountability and make sure this project, and others, are truly necessary for safety. Each and every resident deserves to be heard, and in my district they will be.

There are questions that I have, and that the public deserves answers to. How prudent is this apparent large-scale gas infrastructure investment when it seems we should be migrating away from gas to help our climate? And, who's footing the bill for this gas investment? Can consumers even afford this?

My office is investigating the situation as it unfolds, and we are here as a resource for any of you who may need us. On Monday, July 10th, we will monitor the Baltimore City Circuit Court hearing on this case and continue to provide updates.