# Maryland Gas Infrastructure Spending Raises Concerns



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Maryland utilities are investing over $700 million annually in gas infrastructure, a practice that affects low-income communities and challenges the state's clean energy goals, according to the Office of People’s Counsel (OPC). The OPC's recent report, presented by David Lapp, highlights the steady spending since 2023 and its continuation into 2025.

The state aims for a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2031, 100% clean energy by 2035, and net-zero emissions by 2045. However, extensive gas investments could counteract these objectives. The OPC report states that gas delivery rates for some utilities have tripled since 2010, mainly due to infrastructure upgrades under the Strategic Infrastructure Development and Enhancement Plan (STRIDE). Enacted in 2013, STRIDE allows faster cost recovery for gas utilities but adds monthly fees to customer bills.

Advocates like Laurel Peltier and Emily Scarr emphasize the burden of rising utility rates on low-income households. Approximately 450,000 Maryland households are considered low-income, with many relying on state energy assistance programs.

The OPC recommends discontinuing or curtailing STRIDE and multi-year rate plans. As electrification progresses, OPC forecasts stranded costs for gas infrastructure, urging state planning to mitigate future financial burdens on consumers.