

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2026 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CR-011-2026

Draft No.: 1

Committee: TIEE

Date: 3/12/2026

Action: FAV

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable, 5-0 (In favor: Council Members Dernoga, Olson, Harrison, Adams, and Hunter)

The Committee convened on March 12, 2026, to discuss CR-11-2026, which requests that the Maryland Office of People's Counsel (OPC) investigate the significant public utility rate increases affecting Prince George's County residential customers.

When a utility files a rate case with the Public Service Commission (PSC) seeking to increase its distribution rates (utility charges for delivering gas or electricity), the OPC represents the interests of residential customers, presenting evidence and expert testimony to help keep rates from rising unnecessarily. The OPC's expert witnesses provide detailed reviews of proposed utility spending, including capital expenditures on infrastructure such as pipes (for gas companies), poles and wires (electric companies), operations and maintenance expenditures, and proposed rates of return (including proposed utility profit). The OPC witnesses generally provide written recommendations, subject to live cross-examination during rate case hearings before the PSC. In testimony, OPC witnesses recommend cuts to the utilities' proposed expenditures. OPC rate case witnesses make recommendations based on their expert opinions on how much the utility should charge customers to provide safe and reliable service.

The OPC's June 2024 report (updated in March of 2025) shows how utility rates have changed over time. Using a variety of figures and tables, the report reveals that most Maryland utility customers have seen their gas and electricity rates increase substantially over the last 10-15 years, with some rates increasing by multiples of two or three. The report focuses on the amounts that utilities charge their customers for delivering electricity and gas to customers' homes and businesses, as distinct from the supply (or commodity) charges. While the rates of many of the largest utilities have escalated significantly in recent years, other utilities have only seen modest rate increases, tracking inflation rates. The utilities with rapidly increasing delivery rates have taken advantage of regulatory policies that encourage utility spending on capital infrastructure—such as the substations, poles, and wires of the electric utilities and the pipes of the gas utilities—by allowing utilities to recover such spending, along with a profit, on an accelerated basis.

During the committee’s discussion, Committee staff summarized the resolution’s request. The Policy Analysis & Fiscal Impact statement (PAFI) provides details on the OPC's operations on behalf of residential utility customers. The Office of Law indicated that the resolution is in proper form, and the Office of Central Services provided comments, finding no issues or conflicts with its adoption.

After the discussion, the Committee voted in favor of CR-11-2026 by a vote of 5-0.