

MARYLAND

# THE DAILY RECORD

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## Letter to the editor: Daily Record coverage of utilities disappointing

By: Letter to the editor from:  May 28, 2021

To the editor,

The Daily Record's reporting on Maryland utility matters is astonishingly disappointing. The paper is reprinting — verbatim and without attribution — the press releases of Maryland utility companies while ignoring utility news with important implications for Maryland customers.

On May 17, The Daily Record published verbatim portions of a Columbia Gas press release about its effort to obtain a rate increase from the Public Service Commission. That article copied the utility's press release claims of "proud" investments as if the article was written by a reporter. Days earlier, on May 12, The Daily Record posted an article — again copied entirely from a Potomac Edison press release — regarding PSC approval of that utility's two energy storage projects.

The article did not discuss controversial aspects of those projects or the partial dissents of commissioners, including the PSC chair. Though it has provided more balanced coverage of utility matters in the past, it appears The Daily Record has a recent habit of reprinting utility press releases as their own articles and as if those releases told the full story.

Potomac Edison is a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp., an Ohio-based company embroiled in a far-reaching racketeering and bribery scandal. On the same day as Potomac Edison issued its press release, my office — the Maryland Office of People's Counsel, a state agency that represents utility customers — called on the PSC to investigate FirstEnergy's ownership of Potomac Edison.

Our request detailed the risks to Maryland customers related to the scandal, problems with the parent company's nuclear plants, and the utility's new affiliation with corporate activist Carl Icahn. Our press release on the request was not copied and pasted into a story in The Daily Record; in fact, it received no coverage at all.

David Lapp

Maryland People's Counsel

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