

FOR the purpose of requiring that in matters affecting rates and service by a public service company in Allegany County the Public Service Commission shall hold at least one hearing in Allegany County and during certain hours.

May 29, 1979

Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
Speaker of the House of Delegates
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed House Bill 1567.

House Bill 1567 requires the Public Service Commission to hold at least one evening hearing in Allegany County on "each application by a public service company or a proposed regulation by the Public Service Commission concerning service" affecting Allegany County.

While I agree with the bill's principle thrust, i.e., to expand the opportunities for public enlightenment and to provide Allegany County residents with a convenient opportunity to comment on matters of public interest involving their utility service, the bill, as drafted, is overly broad as it would require hearings on nearly every matter which would effect a public service company operating in Allegany County. The vast majority of these matters involve administrative actions for which formal hearings are not necessary and on which there will be little or no public interest in attending a hearing.

The Public Service Commission has advised me that it will administratively implement the provisions of House Bill 1567 by holding evening hearings in Allegany County on rate increase applications involving the major utilities which provide service in Allegany County. As I understand that the sponsor's intent was to facilitate the hearing process on rate increases, this administrative commitment will avoid the expense associated with holding unnecessary public hearings on other, routine public service company actions.

For the reasons stated, I have decided to veto House Bill 1567.

Sincerely,
Harry Hughes
Governor
