



For Immediate Release
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EHRlich'S SUMMER SIZZLER

MARTIN O'MALLEY CALLS FOR "SHOCK-ABSORBER" TO PROTECT MARYLAND FAMILIES

BALTIMORE, MD (March 8, 2006) – Today, Martin O'Malley announced his strong commitment to working with the Maryland General Assembly to establish a "shock-absorber" to protect Maryland families from imminent home energy price hikes.

"Where Governor Ehrlich has failed, we must act to establish a 'shock-absorber' to protect Maryland's hardworking families, who are already being hit hard by the soaring costs of home heating bills, increased property taxes, fees and tolls," said Martin O'Malley.

The average Maryland family will see a 72 percent spike in their utility bill this summer -- with an average increase of \$743 per year. Despite having three years to prepare for this moment, the Governor and his Public Service Commission have done little to mitigate the damage these increased energy bills are going to do to family budgets.

Under the terms of the 1999 deregulation agreement, the "rate caps" established to protect Maryland families will expire on July 1 costing families millions. The Public Service Commission's "rate-deferral plan," accepted by the governor, does not go far enough to protect Maryland's families. It simply moves the biggest part of the increase past election day, and actually will cost families more in interest over the long-term.

As oil companies like Exxon achieve record profits, it is striking that Maryland's families, including seniors and those living on fixed incomes, must be the ones to absorb these record price hikes.

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