

# GBC, local leaders meet on region's energy crunch

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Increasing demand on the region's power grid.

Increasing complaints from consumers about rising energy rates.

Increasing concerns about global warming.

The energy problems facing the area over the next decade are numerous and large, and the solutions may be incremental advances rather than sweeping actions, private and

state energy executives said at a conference hosted Monday by the **Greater Baltimore Committee**.

"How do we keep bills down, the lights on and meet our environmental goals?" asked Malcolm Woolf, director of the Maryland Energy Administration. "There are no silver bullets, but there are a lot of options. I think of it as silver buckshot."

The U.S. must invest as much as \$750 billion in its energy infrastructure to meet customer demand, which is expected to increase as much as 40 percent in the next few decades, said William Brier, vice president for pol-

icy and public affairs at the Edison Electric Institute.

Rate increases in recent years have been driven by utilities' fuel and infrastructure costs — companies must brace for big jumps in capital expenses in coming years, Brier said.

Maryland has lagged behind other states in going green. The state government has taken the first steps toward putting together a long-range energy plan, and much of the technology to make homes more energy-efficient is already available, Woolf said.

Paul Allen, chief environmental officer of Constellation Energy, touted the

company's plans to build nuclear power plants in the U.S. and Canada.

He said the company has been examining its Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant in Southern Maryland and said the possibility of bringing new nuclear power facilities to Maryland would depend in part on how lawmakers change state taxes.

"We'll be watching this special session very closely to see if Maryland is a friendly place for these ... or if neighboring states are more receptive to having them in their jurisdiction," he said.

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