

# SENATE BILL 651

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By: **Senator Kagan**

Introduced and read first time: January 29, 2024

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Business Regulation – Sale of Motor Fuel – Pricing Signage**  
3 **(Gas Price Gouging Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of altering a signage requirement for retail service stations relating to the  
5 price of regular gasoline; altering a signage authorization for retail service stations  
6 relating to the price of diesel and other motor fuel products; repealing an exemption  
7 from a certain signage requirement for retail service station dealers with not more  
8 than a certain number of dispensing units and nozzles; and generally relating to  
9 pricing signs at retail service stations.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
11 Article – Business Regulation  
12 Section 10–315  
13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
14 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Business Regulation**

18 10–315.

19 (a) A person who sells motor fuel at retail shall display signs in accordance with  
20 this section.

21 (b) (1) All dispensing equipment for motor fuel shall be marked conspicuously  
22 to show in numerals of equal size the price, including taxes, of a gallon of the motor fuel  
23 offered for sale.

24 (2) If numerals that show a fractional cent are used, the combined height

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 and width of the numerator and denominator shall equal the height and width of the other  
2 numerals used.

3 (c) (1) A sign or other means on the premises and approaches to a retail outlet  
4 that advertises the retail price of motor fuel:

5 (i) may list the price and each tax separately if the listing of the  
6 total of the price and all taxes is the same size as the separate listing of the price; but

7 (ii) shall list the total of the price and all taxes by numerals of  
8 uniform size.

9 (2) In the listing of the total of the price and all taxes, a denominator need  
10 not be used to indicate a fraction, but:

11 (i) if a denominator is used, the numerator and denominator  
12 combined shall be the same size as the numeral that indicates the whole number; or

13 (ii) if a denominator is not used, the numerator shall be the same  
14 size as the numeral that indicates the whole number.

15 (d) If the retail price of motor fuel is advertised on a sign or by other means on  
16 the premises of and approaches to the retail outlet, the grade designation displayed for any  
17 motor fuel in the advertisement shall be the same as the grade designation that is required  
18 to be displayed for that motor fuel on the retail dispensing pump as specified by the  
19 Comptroller.

20 (e) (1) [This subsection does not apply to a retail service station dealer who  
21 operates with not more than 3 dispensing units that combined have not more than 6  
22 nozzles.

23 (2)] (i) Each retail service station dealer shall keep a sign on the  
24 premises that:

25 1. [states the lowest price] **PROMINENTLY DISPLAYS**  
26 **CLEARLY AND VISIBLY**, for a whole measurement unit of regular gasoline sold on the  
27 premises:

28 **A. THE CREDIT AND DEBIT PRICE, IF HIGHER THAN THE**  
29 **CASH PRICE; OR**

30 **B. THE CREDIT AND DEBIT PRICE AND THE CASH PRICE;**

31 2. states the unit of measurement used; and

32 3. is readable by passing motorists.

1 (ii) The sign required under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph also  
2 may [state the lowest price] **PROMINENTLY DISPLAY CLEARLY AND VISIBLY**, for a whole  
3 measurement unit of diesel and other motor fuel products sold on the premises:

4 **1. THE CREDIT AND DEBIT PRICE, IF HIGHER THAN THE**  
5 **CASH PRICE; OR**

6 **2. THE CREDIT AND DEBIT PRICE AND THE CASH PRICE.**

7 **[(3)] (2)** All numerals on the sign shall:

8 (i) be uniform;

9 (ii) be at least 8 inches high and 3.5 inches wide; and

10 (iii) have a brush stroke of at least 1 inch.

11 **[(4)] (3)** A numeral in a fraction or a letter shall be at least one-third the  
12 height of a numeral that indicates a whole number.

13 **[(5)] (4)** If a new or additional sign is required to comply with this  
14 subsection, the supplier of the gasoline shall provide the sign and numerals without cost to  
15 the retail service station dealer.

16 (f) A sign required at a service station by this section or any other State or federal  
17 law is exempt from the provisions of a local law, ordinance, or regulation for the purpose of  
18 determining:

19 (1) the total number of signs permitted; and

20 (2) the area of signs permitted.

21 (g) Except as provided in subsection (f) of this section, signs regulated by this  
22 section or other State law or by federal law may be regulated by the local zoning authority  
23 and shall be consistent with the local law, ordinance, or regulation governing signs.

24 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED**, That this Act shall take effect  
25 October 1, 2024.