

Cyber-Charity

Making the shift from snail mail to online customer donations.

National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference
June 26-28, 2018

Session 4D: “Utility Support of Low Income Agencies”

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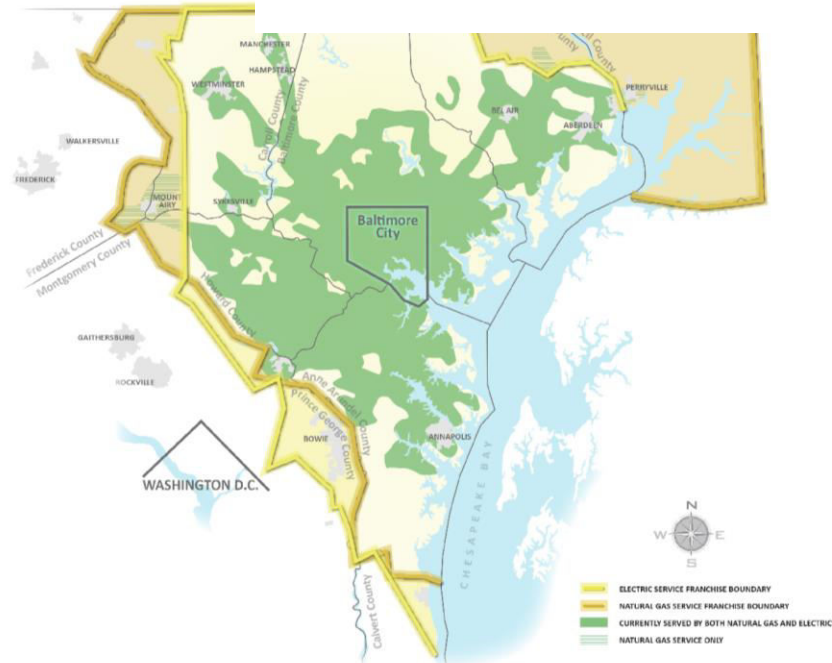
The Players

BGE

BGE, headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland's largest natural gas and electric utility. BGE's more than 3,200 employees deliver power to more than 1.25 million electric customers and more than 650,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland.



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[THAT'S
SMART
ENERGY]SM

The Players

Fuel Fund of Maryland

The Fuel Fund of Maryland provides resources to vulnerable Maryland families for heat and home utility needs. Last year the Fuel Fund assisted more than 7,000 households in the Baltimore region. The Fuel Fund was incorporated in 1981 as the Fuel Fund of Central Maryland, following the nation's first energy crisis during the late 1970s when an oil embargo squeezed supply, and energy prices soared.



The Problem

- The primary means of soliciting BGE customer donations to the Fuel Fund of Maryland has been the annual envelope campaign:
 - Postage-paid envelopes inserted in BGE bills in December and January each year
- For various reasons, that campaign has declined in recent years:
 - Aggregate loss of \$4.5 million in donations between 2005 and 2014.
 - Total loss of ~\$13.5 million in bill payments in the same period, with customer and BGE payments/credits.

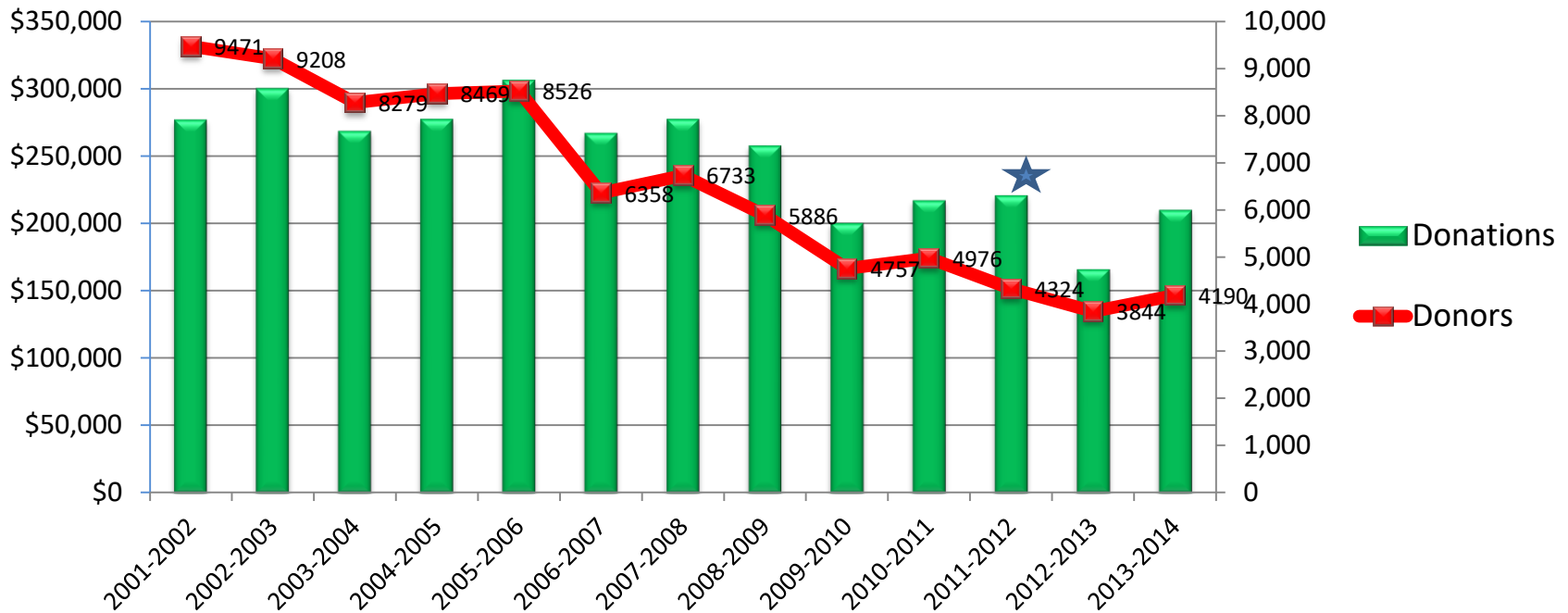


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Envelope Campaign historical results

The decade-long decline in total giving through the Envelope Campaign...



★ Included a \$25,000 gift from one donor.

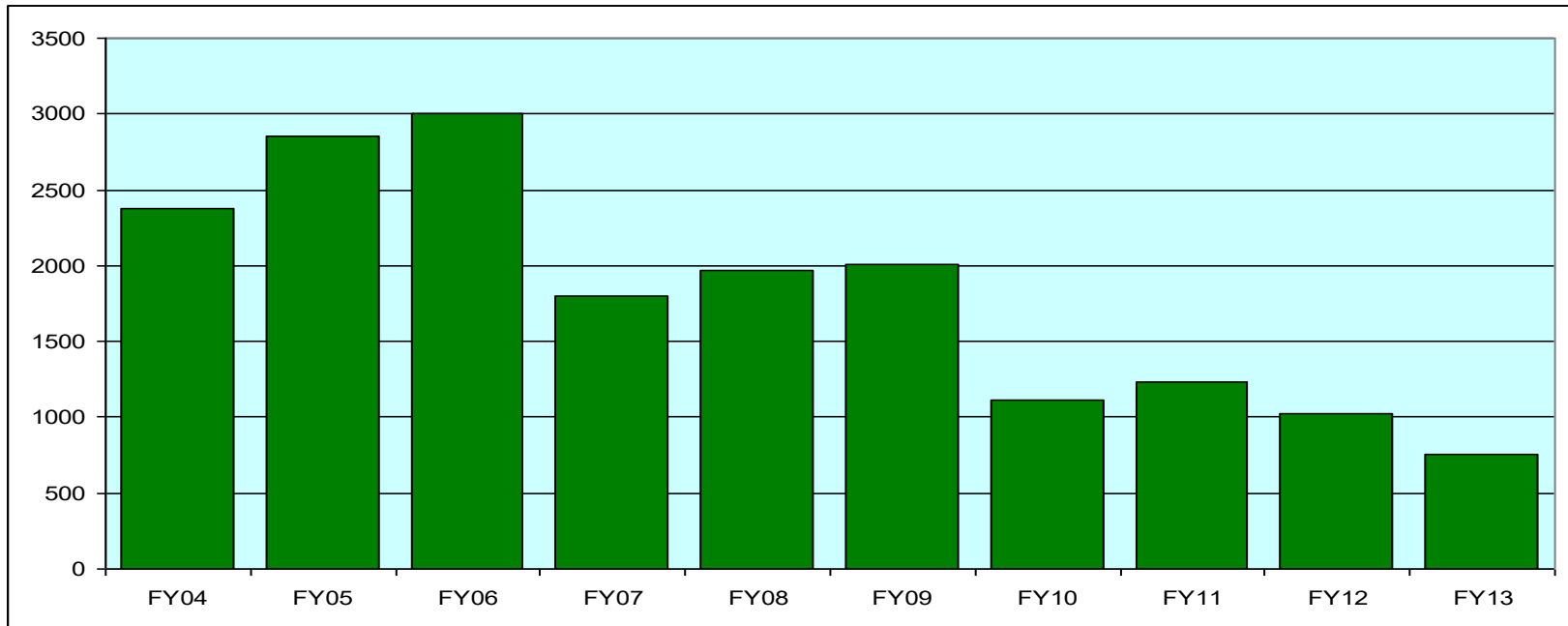


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Envelope Campaign historical results

....has corresponded to a decline in new or first-time donors to the Fuel Fund:



Obtaining new donors is key to the Fuel Fund's future success:

- Fuel Fund has strong donor retention: 64% overall; 82% after the third gift
- Each new BGE customer donor contributes a lifetime total of \$281



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Clues to a solution:

- Increase in BGE customer “e-billing”
 - About 21% of BGE customers do not receive a hard copy bill today.
- About 352,000 BGE customers pay online at bge.com.
 - Based on the 2014 envelope campaign return rate of 0.47%, this option could acquire about 1,650 new on-line donors.
- Fuel Fund calculates that each donor contributes \$281 over a lifetime
 - At 1,650 new donors that could raise \$464,000 in contributions.



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Outage | Pay Bill | Moving | Contact Us

Search...



My Account

Outages

Ways to Save

Smart Energy

Safety & Community

Name: **David Howard Conn**

Account #

Address:



Baltimore, MD 21209

Last Payment:

Received: **05/2**

Current Bill: **05**

Amount Due: \$



Due Date: **06/22/2018**

I want

Home > My Account: My Bill & Usage > Pay My Bill > Make a Payment

My Bill & Usage -

Pay My Bill -

Make a Payment

Automatic Payment

Find a Payment Location

Payment Arrangements +

Other Ways to Pay

My Bill Details

Billing Options +

Account History

Understanding My Bill +

My Usage +

Make a Fuel Fund Donation



Your gift today helps ensure your neighbors have the power they need to keep the lights and the heat on. With your 100% tax-deductible donation, the Fuel Fund of Maryland, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, gives Maryland families in need a new beginning by providing financial assistance to restore their power, and the tools to afford their home energy needs. The Fuel Fund of Maryland is an independent charity and is not affiliated with BGE.

Donation Amount

Any Amount

\$25

\$50

\$75

\$100

No Donation

Your donation will be reflected as a separate charge from BGE. Your donation will process on 06/02/2018 from the account designated as "Bank of America Checking". You may make a donation for any amount between \$1 and \$1,000. For donations of more than \$1,000, please contact the Fuel Fund of Maryland directly. It will be in addition to your BGE payment of \$118.



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Account History

Understanding My Bill +

My Usage +

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The Details

Requirements:

- BGE must be able to track all donations for auditing purposes;
- Customers should be able to donate any amount they choose (*up to \$1,000*);
- Customers must be logged in to their account in bge.com so they do not have to submit personal and payment information;
- The donation should not appear on a customer's account as an excess credit or as an item owed showing on the bill;
- A bill message should acknowledge the donation in the month it is paid;
- The program must be able to provide Fuel Fund with donor information, for tax acknowledgement purposes.

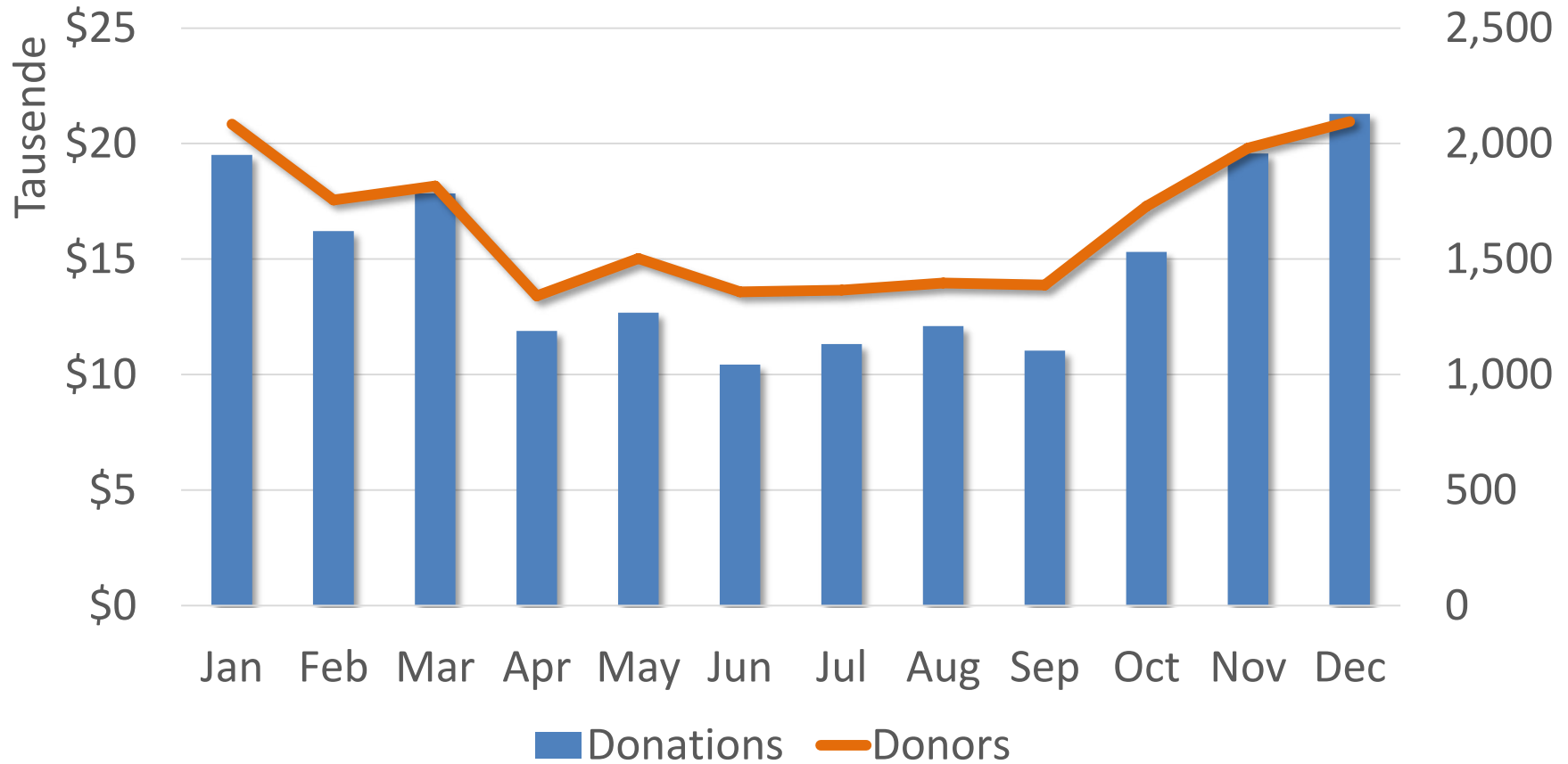


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Results

2017 Donations

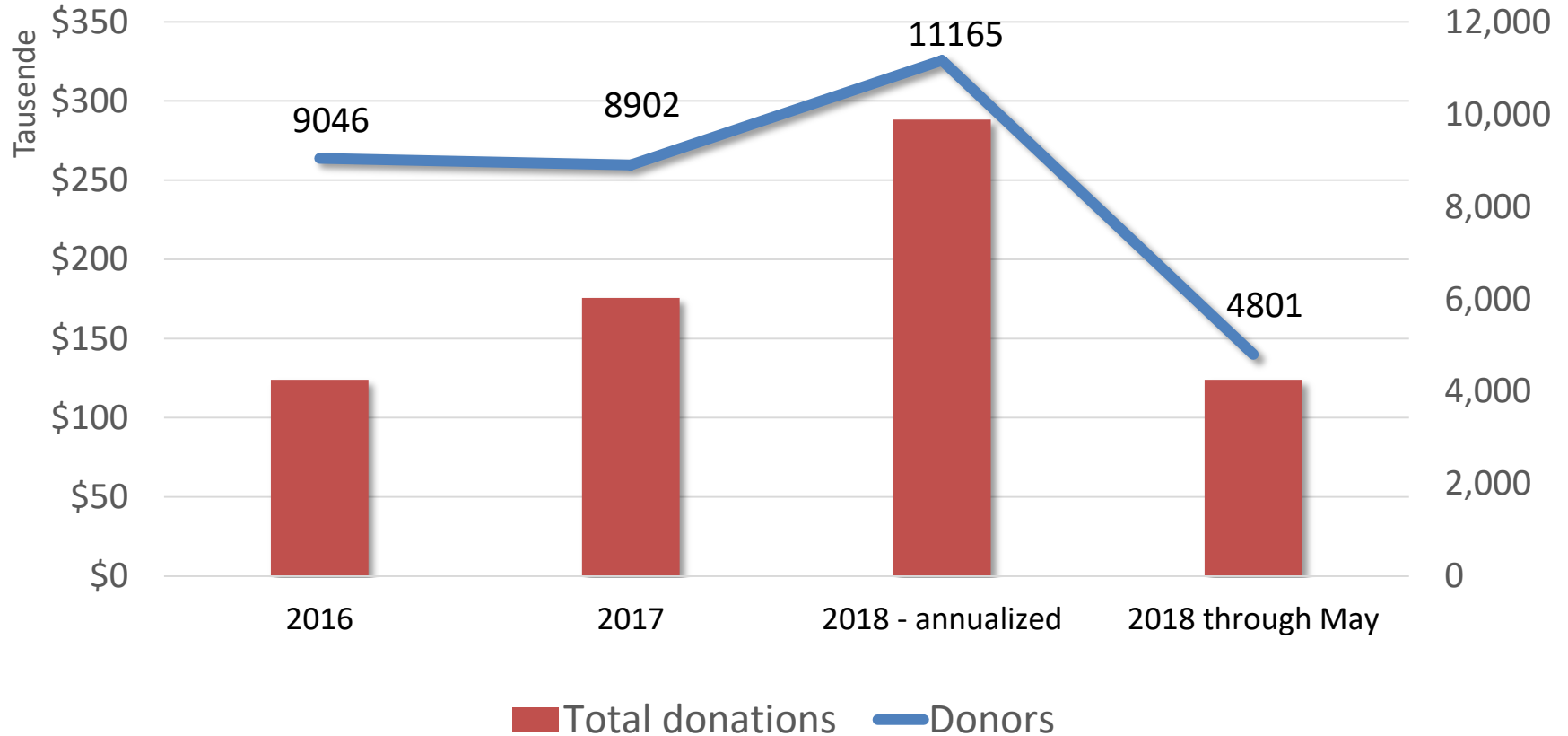


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Results

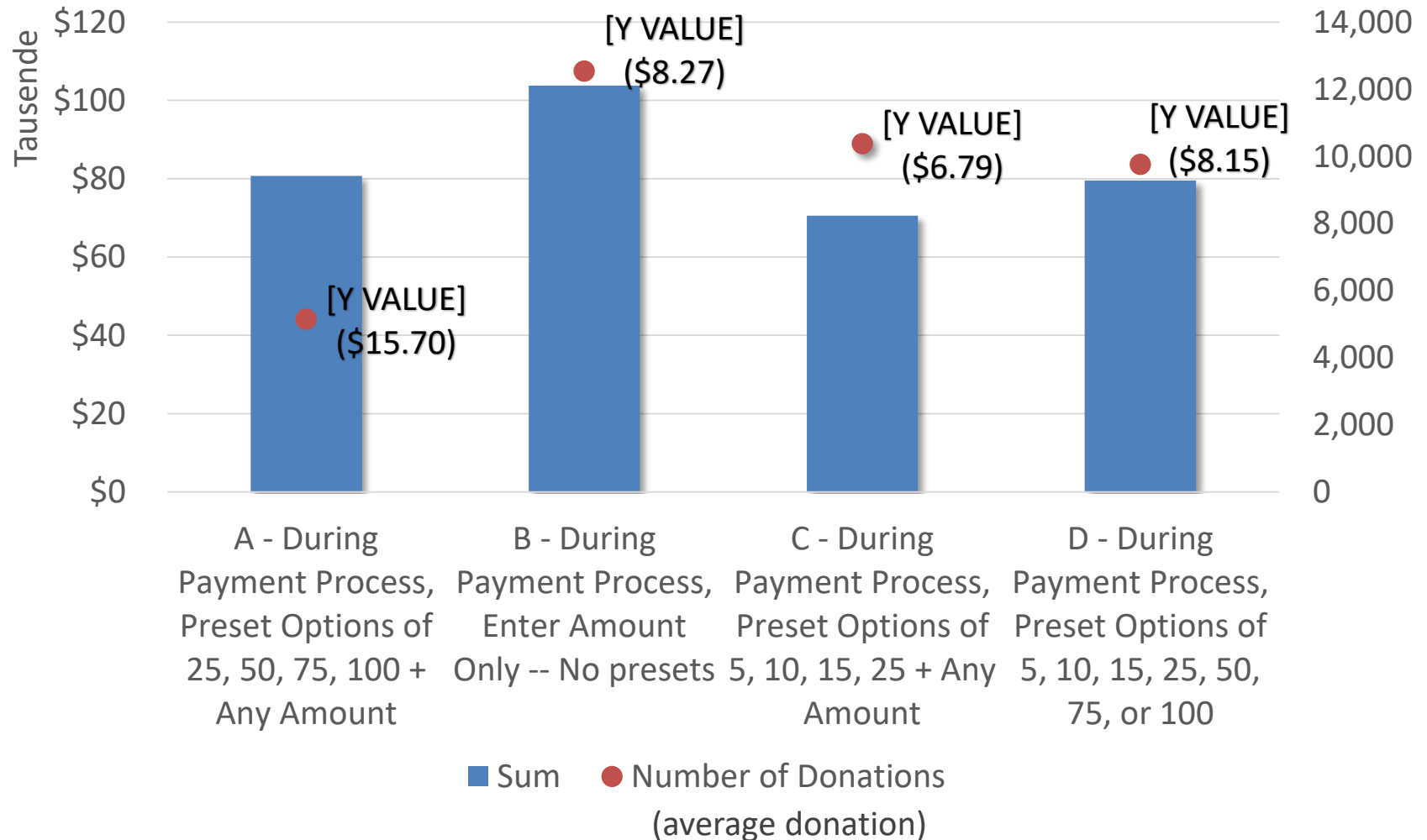
Donations trend



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“A/B Testing” (assigned randomly by account number)



Issues: "I'm tired of seeing this!"

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Donation Amount

Please don't show this to me...
 for a while

We won't ask you for another three months.

Please don't show this to me...
 for a while
 anymore

We won't ask you again to donate.

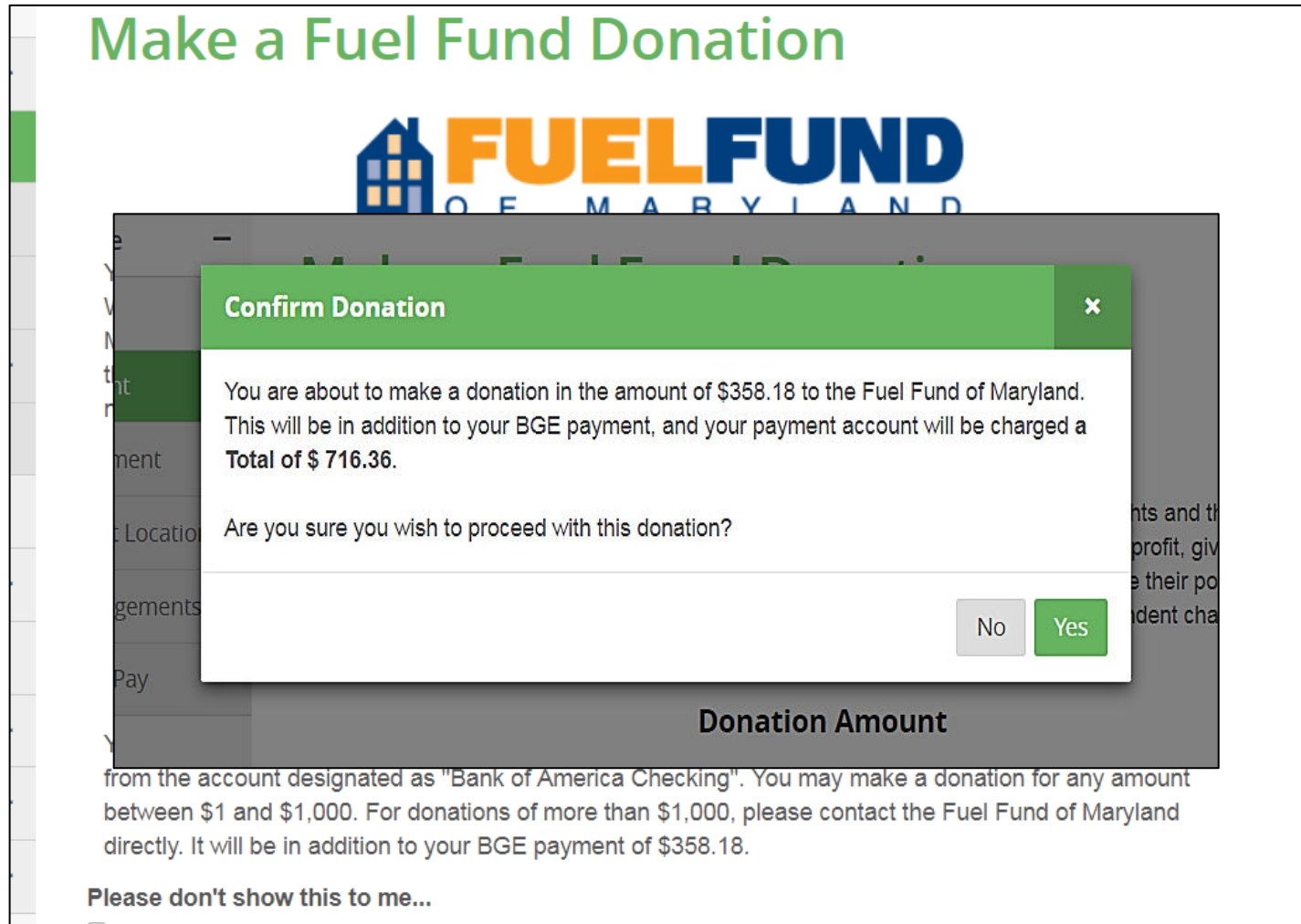
You can still donate at any time from the Schedule Payment screen by clicking "Donate to Fuel Fund" in the lower left after you've scheduled your BGE payments.



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Issues: "Oops, I donated my bill amount."



Make a Fuel Fund Donation

FUEL FUND
OF MARYLAND

Confirm Donation [X]

You are about to make a donation in the amount of \$358.18 to the Fuel Fund of Maryland. This will be in addition to your BGE payment, and your payment account will be charged a **Total of \$ 716.36.**

Are you sure you wish to proceed with this donation?

No Yes

Donation Amount

from the account designated as "Bank of America Checking". You may make a donation for any amount between \$1 and \$1,000. For donations of more than \$1,000, please contact the Fuel Fund of Maryland directly. It will be in addition to your BGE payment of \$358.18.

Please don't show this to me...



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What's next?

- Settle on one of the four test options
- Fuel Fund would like customer emails
 - Looking into adding opt-out feature
 - *“Check this box if you do not want to share your email with Fuel Fund.”*

Questions?



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