

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1490
Economic Matters

(Delegate A. Washington)

Local Government - Overhead Transmission Lines - Property Maintenance

This bill authorizes counties and municipalities to enact a law that establishes standards and requirements for an electric company to follow to maintain the property on which an overhead transmission line is located. Counties and municipalities are authorized to impose a civil penalty of up to \$500 for a first violation and up to \$1,000 for each subsequent violation.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: County and municipal revenues and expenditures may increase to the extent local laws are enacted.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The standards and requirements that counties and municipalities may establish under the bill may relate to (1) the maintenance of any structures and equipment on the property so that the structures and equipment are in good physical and safe condition and are graffiti-free; (2) the maintenance of the grounds of the property so that the grounds are free of litter, garbage, and rubbish; are sanitary; and do not have uncontrolled weed growth; and (3) the securing of the premises of the property and its appurtenances to prevent trespassers.

An “overhead transmission line” is defined as a transmission line that is designed to carry a voltage in excess of 69,000 volts and is owned by the electric company that serves the electric distribution service territory where the transmission line is located.

Background: Maryland is divided into 13 electric utility service territories (**Exhibit 1**). The 4 largest are served by investor-owned utilities; 4 represent rural electric cooperatives; and 5 are served by municipal operations. The Power Plant Research Program Fact Book for 2014 indicates that there are over 2,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines in the State.

Exhibit 1
Electric Utilities in Maryland

Investor-owned Power Companies	Rural Electric Cooperative Systems
Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE)	A&N Electric Cooperative
Delmarva Power	Choptank Electric Cooperative
Potomac Edison	Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative
Potomac Electric Power (PEPCO)	Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative
Municipal Systems	
Berlin, Easton, Hagerstown, Thurmont, Williamsport	

Local Fiscal Effect: Local government revenues and expenditures may increase to the extent local laws related to maintenance standards for property with overhead transmission lines are enacted. Local governments may incur increased administrative expenditures for enforcing these laws, while realizing increased revenues from fines due to violations of the maintenance standards.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Kent and Worcester counties; Maryland Association of Counties; City of Havre de Grace; Maryland Municipal League; Public Service Commission; Department of Legislative Services

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nb/tso

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