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Re: Bills before the MD State Legislature prohibiting use of land in Agricultural Preservation Easement Programs for construction of Transmission Lines: HB0631, HB1396, SB0737, SB0955

Dear Committee Representatives:

My husband and I reside at the above address along a scenic byway in Carroll County amid farms in Agricultural Preservation Easements. The farmer next door farms a portion of our property and is directly impacted by the MPRP proposed towers and power lines complicating his farming operation that has been in the family for generations. To quote from the State of Maryland tourism web site, "top quality farm soil benefitting the #1 industry in the State of Maryland, Agriculture, is a finite resource". It should not be squandered for erecting power line towers and endangering those who work in the industry. Preserved farmland in easement for perpetuity means farming is the highest and best use of the land, period. Contiguous blocks of open farmland allow farmers to share resources such as aerial spraying and seeding costs which are impossible with high voltage power lines in the way. Breaching the trust of these easement programs puts the entire concept at risk, wasting millions invested in the program and working against county and state master plan goals for preservation of the industry. Alternatives to greenfield projects crossing preserved farmland exist and can improve the safety and reliability of our outdated electrical grid. Greenfield transmission projects generate the maximum financial benefit to the vendor at the greatest cost to the public.

We love and care deeply about the future of this state. People will look back on this and say we didn't fully appreciate how finite our green spaces and farmland are, how important they are to our rural economy (ag and tourism) and our mental health. High voltage power lines and towers will leave a massive scar across our state's most beautiful countryside, crossing many designated scenic byways. This has added to the stress of our farming community that already deals with elements outside their control.

Many of these farmers take no salary for years at a time to build their business. Giving up something to benefit the good of the whole is a concept they are living proof of, many have placed land in Ag Preservation programs for "perpetuity" for that very reason. They work hard every day to grow our food and feed for livestock. We must protect what remains of the unspoiled natural landscape and number one industry in this beautiful state we are proud to call home.

Thank you for approving this important bill. Please contact us if you have questions.

Very sincerely,

Jennifer Teeter and Frank Baylor