



## House Bill 829

### *Public Utilities - Transmission Lines - Advanced Transmission Technologies*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Economic Matters Committee

Date: February 20, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 829. This bill calls for additional considerations and requirements for the construction of transmission lines.

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly is facing a historic number of complex generational challenges. One of the loudest issues to arise has been Maryland opposition to the Piedmont Reliability Project. The Project, which crosses Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick Counties, effectively creates an “extension cord” across some of our state’s prime agricultural lands, providing Pennsylvania-generated energy to Virginia-based data centers, with little direct benefit to Marylanders. As the General Assembly debates how to address this and other energy challenges, one of the biggest underlying issues will be how to prioritize now competing state priorities (i.e., energy demands and environmental goals).

As drafted, HB 829 requires the Public Service Commission and applicants to more deeply consider the impact of projects and project routes on ratepayers, the environment, and other factors. Additional consideration must also be given to the use of advanced transmission technologies as a means to avoid unnecessary community and ratepayer impacts. As many transmission infrastructure upgrades may uniquely be accomplished by upgrading existing lines or using existing land, counties join the sponsor in wanting to protect both our mutual constituents and the finite number of conserved lands.

This is commonsense legislation which seeks to address conflicts between Maryland’s growing demand for energy and billions invested into other pro-climate policies to date. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to issue HB 829 a **FAVORABLE** report.