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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of my family as a landowner whose agricultural and forested property, protected by a conservation easement and under an active forest management plan, is under imminent threat of condemnation for the MPRP power line project. I strongly support House Bill 81, the "Protect Maryland Farm Lands Act," and urge your support for its passage.

This bill represents a critical step toward ensuring fair compensation for landowners when their property is taken through eminent domain. The 350% valuation provision for actively used farm and agricultural lands recognizes the irreplaceable environmental, cultural, and economic value of these lands. It also provides a fairer framework for valuing property than traditional methods, which often fail to account for the long-term impact of these takings.

Our property is not just land; it is part of Maryland's agricultural heritage and a vital resource for local food production, wildlife habitat, and forest preservation. The conservation easement and forest management plan for our land was established to protect these values in perpetuity. However, the proposed MPRP power line project threatens to permanently devalue this property, irreparably damage its ecological integrity, and undermine its agricultural productivity. If the power lines are constructed, the intent of the conservation easement and forest management plan will be compromised, and the property's worth—both economic and intrinsic—will be greatly diminished.

Maryland's farms and forests are foundational to its identity and economy. They provide open space, preserve biodiversity, and contribute to the well-being of our communities. House Bill 81 ensures that these vital resources are valued appropriately and that landowners receive equitable compensation when their land is taken for public projects.

I appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and your support for protecting Maryland's agricultural and forested lands.

Sincerely,
Erich Steiger