

## Unfavorable Testimony on HB 1396

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brenda Myers, and I am writing today to express my opposition to House Bill 1396 (HB 1396). **While I recognize the importance of protecting private property rights, this bill takes an extreme approach that would hinder Maryland's ability to transition toward a sustainable and reliable energy future.** *HB 1396 unfairly targets renewable energy projects, blocking necessary infrastructure development at a time when Maryland must be expanding, not restricting, its clean energy capabilities.*

## HB 1396 is Problematic

HB 1396 places unnecessary and counterproductive restrictions on energy infrastructure development by:

**Banning Eminent Domain for Renewable Energy Generation** – By prohibiting the use of eminent domain for power lines and generating stations that produce electricity from wind or solar energy, this bill effectively singles out renewable energy projects while allowing other forms of infrastructure to proceed. This discrimination against clean energy will slow down Maryland's transition to a more sustainable power grid.

**Blocking Critical Energy Investments** – With Maryland facing increasing energy demands, particularly due to the growth of data centers and electrification initiatives, restricting the expansion of power infrastructure is short-sighted. The ability to build and connect renewable energy projects is vital to ensuring that Maryland can meet its energy needs with clean and cost-effective solutions.

**Undermining Grid Reliability and Energy Security** – Renewable energy infrastructure, including solar and wind generation, needs expanded transmission capacity to deliver electricity where it is needed. HB 1396 would make it nearly impossible to construct new transmission lines, limiting Maryland's ability to modernize its grid and integrate more renewable energy sources. This, in turn, could lead to greater reliance on fossil fuels and imported electricity from other states.

## The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) and HB 1396

While the opposition to the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) is understandable, using HB 1396 as a tool to block such projects sets a dangerous precedent. A broad restriction on eminent domain for power infrastructure could prevent future renewable energy projects from being built efficiently, delaying Maryland's clean energy transition and jeopardizing energy security.

Instead of banning eminent domain for specific types of energy projects, Maryland should focus on a balanced approach that ensures property rights are respected while allowing necessary infrastructure to move forward in a responsible and community-oriented manner.

## Why HB 1396 is a Step in the Wrong Direction

### 1. It Hinders Maryland's Clean Energy Goals

Maryland has committed to ambitious renewable energy targets, including reaching 100% clean electricity by 2045. By prohibiting eminent domain for wind and solar projects, HB 1396 undermines this goal and makes it more difficult to achieve a sustainable energy future.

## **2. It Favors Fossil Fuel Infrastructure Over Clean Energy**

The bill specifically prohibits eminent domain for wind and solar projects but does not apply the same restrictions to fossil fuel-based infrastructure, such as gas pipelines or transmission lines for non-renewable power plants. This inequity creates a policy that disadvantages clean energy solutions.

## **3. It Reduces Maryland's Ability to Meet Growing Energy Demand**

With the increasing power needs of Maryland's residents, businesses, and data centers, limiting the ability to build new power lines and generating stations will create long-term energy shortages, higher costs for consumers, and increased dependence on out-of-state electricity imports.

## **4. It Ignores Alternative Approaches to Property Rights Protections**

Rather than outright banning eminent domain for renewable energy projects, Maryland should focus on policies that ensure fair compensation for landowners, improve community engagement in infrastructure planning, and explore alternatives such as underground transmission lines or cooperative land-use agreements.

## **Maryland Needs a Smarter Approach**

HB 1396 presents an **overly restrictive and harmful approach** to property rights protection that *disproportionately targets renewable energy development*. While property rights are important, they should not come at the expense of Maryland's clean energy transition and long-term energy security. Instead of passing HB 1396, lawmakers should work toward a **balanced solution that protects landowners** while allowing Maryland to build the infrastructure necessary for a sustainable future.

I urge this committee to **oppose HB 1396** and instead support policies that promote responsible energy development while respecting community concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brenda Myers

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