

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Delegate C.T. Wilson and Members of the House  
Economic Matters Committee

**Re: Testimony - Unfavorable - House Bill 1270 - Natural Resources - Wildland Areas -  
Overhead Transmission Lines**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

I am respectfully submitting this testimony in opposition to House Bill 1270 - Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines. This bill will provide an exemption for a new transmission line by NextEra Energy through three sensitive State Wildlands in Western Maryland in advance of a Public Service Commission (PSC) Public Certificate of Convenience and Necessity.

The proposed exemption in HB1270 threatens some of Maryland's most sensitive and pristine public lands, including: the first Wildland designated in 1973 on Big Savage Mountain, the Bear Pen Wildland in Savage River State Forest, which supports a native brook trout stream, and the Dan's Mountain Wildland, an Audubon State Significant Bird Area. A NextEra transmission line would result in the disturbance and loss of forest and wildlife habitat in Maryland's most important ecological areas protected by the Maryland General Assembly.

The passage of HB1270 would mean that the Legislature has pre-approved an exemption for a future, yet-to-be determined alignment for the development of a NextEra transmission line through the State's Wildlands if the PSC issues a Certificate in the future. This legislation is unnecessary as the Wildlands regulations provide for a process to authorize a transmission line exemption in a Wildland, but the regulations include an important requirement for public notice and a hearing (COMAR 08.01.02.05).

The Maryland Wildlands Preservation System is the equivalent of the federal Wilderness system, preserving the most pristine and ecologically sensitive state lands remaining in Maryland. As a 28-year employee and retiree of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, I believe that our work with the citizens of Maryland and the Maryland General Assembly to designate and preserve Maryland's Wildlands for today and future generations was some of the most important conservation work of our careers. Please protect this natural resource legacy, and the requirement for public involvement in the decision making process, by voting against HB1270. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nita Settina

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