

OPPOSE HB1270 – Ovrhead Transmission Lines

Good Afternoon Members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

We urge you to defeat HB1270. Admittedly our nation and our state must find ways to increase our supply of electricity and to transport that electric power to additional data centers; and one can argue that this objectives serves the common good, even if Maryland consumers are not direct beneficiaries of this proposed transmission line. However, we wish to cite three principal reasons why this particular bill is not the right answer and should be defeated:

1. We have very little completely wild, untouched lands left in Maryland, and the Wildlands of the Youghiogheny River are one of them. (We say this, even knowing that Potomac Edison has a transmission line there, which pre-dated the Wildlands designation, and so was grandfathered into the legislation that established the protected areas.) Let us not do anything to destroy this last remaining pristine area. We do have other wildlands throughout the state, and this legislation would open the door to violating those areas as well.
2. This bill makes it much easier for any utility, NextEra or any other, now or in the future, either in Garrett county or elsewhere, to circumvent the protected wildlands of the state. The wording of this bill gives too much leeway to NextEra. Among other provisions, it allows a bill to move forward without the Governor's support. Bad idea.
3. This entire proposal was initiated in a most underhanded way. The public needs to be expressly and overtly involved, consulted, and represented before we get to the stage of legislation. This type of action require public hearings, discussion, and support. We should have had newspaper stories for tha last year at least. This seems like some political skullduggery, trying to sneak this in while no one was looking.

Thank you for listening.

--Dr. Robert J. Spear and Dr. Mary Helen Spear, Swanton, Garrett County