

My name is Matthew C. Fitzpatrick. I am Professor and Associate Director for Research at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science – Appalachian Laboratory in Frostburg, Maryland. I also serve as Host Director of the Chesapeake Bay Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit. I hold a Ph.D. in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology from the University of Tennessee and completed my postdoctoral training at Harvard University. I have authored nearly 100 scientific papers, and my research has been cited over 10,000 times. I am listed in Stanford's ranking of the Top 2% of scientists globally. My work has garnered international media attention, and I am commonly called upon by the press to speak on matters related to environmental science, natural resources, and climate change. Lastly, I am a resident of Garrett County whose property values could be directly impacted by the proposed new transmission line. **I present this testimony on behalf of myself.**

I strongly oppose HB1270 for the following reasons:

- **It is not needed.** HB1270 would create a dangerous precedent by providing a blanket exception for a single corporation to permanently alter the most pristine areas of the state of Maryland, of which designated wildlands make up less than 1%. HB1270 seeks to circumvent the process already established on how exceptions can be made to use the land within designated wildlands. This process was established within the statute that established the Wildlands designation and should thus be followed. The private company supporting this legislation has yet to avail themselves of this important state process.
- **It would harm Maryland most important natural resources.** The state's wildlands are conserved as the least affected by human development and containing sensitive habitat and endangered species. The transmission line would irrevocably diminish these unique and largely untouched places. They would create an eye sore and also frequently emit a very loud buzzing noise that would greatly impact recreation experiences and wildlife. Many of Maryland's iconic wildlife species like bears, bobcats, fishers, and brook trout require large, unbroken tracks of forest, of which the state has precious few. The 200-foot right-of-way would fragment some of Maryland's largest, contiguous tracks of primary forest, while reducing Maryland's forest cover – and would do so in high in the Chesapeake watershed. As a result, the state will be further challenged to meet its goals to improve the health of the Bay and address climate change.
- **There has been a lack of public input.** The sponsors of this bill have stated that their intention is to be open with the public, yet no public meetings have been

held regarding this legislation. In a recent interview, Senator McKay claimed the required right-of-way would be only ten to fifteen feet on either side of existing transmission lines when in fact the right-of-way is 15-20 times larger than that at 200 feet. Collectively, there is a sense a of predetermined outcomes that would undermine credibility of the scoping process and potentially skew final decision-making.

For these reasons, I am requesting that Del. Hinebaugh withdraw this bill.

Respectfully yours,



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