

Testimony in Support of HB 1362

Presented by Bryan Price

Maryland House of Delegates Hearing on HB 1362

Chair, Vice Chair, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1362 (HB 1362). My name is Bryan Price, and I am a Maryland resident committed to ensuring that our state's eminent domain laws are fair, just, and protective of property owners. HB 1362 is a necessary step toward ensuring that landowners receive full and fair compensation when their property is seized for public use.

Eminent domain allows the government to take private property for public infrastructure projects, but the U.S. Constitution requires that property owners receive just compensation. Historically, this has been interpreted as the fair market value of the property taken. However, this interpretation fails to account for the additional financial burdens property owners face when their land is condemned. HB 1362 seeks to rectify this imbalance by ensuring that property owners are compensated not just for the value of their land, but also for the financial strain of navigating the condemnation process.

HB 1362 introduces a more equitable approach to just compensation by requiring that landowners be reimbursed for legal fees, expert fees, and other related costs. These expenses can be significant, as property owners are often forced to hire attorneys, appraisers, and land surveyors to ensure they are receiving fair treatment. Without this provision, many property owners must absorb these costs themselves, reducing the compensation they receive and placing them at a financial disadvantage in proceedings against powerful government or corporate entities.

This issue is particularly relevant in light of the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), a 70-mile, 500,000-volt transmission line proposed to run through Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick counties. If approved, the MPRP would require the condemnation of private land to make way for massive transmission towers. For many landowners, this means facing eminent domain proceedings that force them to spend thousands of dollars on legal fees and expert assessments just to defend their rights and negotiate fair compensation. HB 1362 ensures that these property owners are not left to bear these financial burdens alone.

The financial impact of eminent domain proceedings goes beyond legal costs. Homeowners and farmers facing condemnation must also contend with lost productivity,

relocation expenses, and the emotional toll of being forced to fight for their property. For farmers, the loss of even a portion of their land can have devastating consequences, disrupting carefully planned operations, reducing crop yields, and threatening the viability of family-run farms. For homeowners, the threat of condemnation means uncertainty about their future, potential displacement, and the distress of watching a home they have worked for be taken away.

I have seen firsthand how the looming threat of eminent domain has disrupted lives. The MPRP has forced me and my neighbors into a state of constant anxiety and uncertainty. Instead of focusing on our families, careers, and futures, we are spending our time researching legal options, attending hearings, and trying to protect what is rightfully ours. The financial and emotional burden is overwhelming, and it is only compounded by the knowledge that, under current law, we may not even be compensated for these struggles. HB 1362 provides a long-overdue correction to this injustice by ensuring that landowners are truly made whole when their property is taken for public use.

This bill has received bipartisan support because it addresses a fundamental issue of fairness. No Marylander should have to pay out of pocket just to ensure they receive just compensation for their seized property. By enacting HB 1362, the Maryland General Assembly can ensure that eminent domain does not place an undue financial burden on property owners who are already facing the loss of their land.

I urge the committee to support HB 1362 and take a stand for Maryland's landowners. This bill represents a necessary step toward fairness, ensuring that those affected by eminent domain receive the compensation they truly deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan Price

21221 York Road

Parkton, MD 21120

Bryan.s.price@gmail.com

410.302.8074