

Testimony in Opposition to HB1270
Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines
Economic Matters Committee
March 6, 2025

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong opposition** to HB1270, which seeks to exempt portions of the Big Savage Mountain Wildland, Bear Pen Wildland, and Dan's Mountain Wildland from their current protected designation to allow for the potential construction of overhead transmission lines.

Maryland's designated wildland areas are among the state's most pristine and ecologically significant landscapes, offering critical habitat to diverse plant and animal species while providing invaluable recreational and scenic opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The Wildlands Preservation System was created to ensure these natural areas remain undisturbed for future generations — a commitment that must not be undermined.

By allowing exemptions to these protections, HB1270 sets a dangerous precedent that could open the door to further degradation of our state's precious wildlands. Construction of overhead transmission lines in these sensitive ecosystems would have **irreversible impacts** on wildlife habitats, water quality, and the natural beauty that defines these areas. Fragmentation caused by infrastructure projects can disrupt species migration, introduce invasive species, and permanently alter the landscape.

Additionally, there are **alternative routes and technologies** available to deliver necessary energy infrastructure without compromising protected wildlands. Advancing such options would align with Maryland's commitment to conservation and sustainability while still meeting the state's energy needs.

I urge the committee to reject HB1270 and uphold Maryland's dedication to preserving its wildland areas. Protecting these landscapes is not only an environmental imperative but also a reflection of our state's values and commitment to future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Dawn Beitzel