



Maryland

Energy Administration

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee
FROM: MEA
SUBJECT: HB 657 - Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines
DATE: February 20, 2025

MEA Position: LETTER OF CONCERN

This bill would potentially unduly restrict transmission development in the State, which threatens to reduce the reliability and resilience benefits of transmission or increase per-unit costs that can be imposed on residential and commercial ratepayers through retail rates.¹ The legislation broadens the Public Service Commission’s (“the Commission”) examination of alternatives from an existing transmission line to additional types of alternatives, yet restricts the alternatives considered to those that avoid *any* overlap with several types of real property subject to local jurisdiction: land located within a planned growth area or zoned for residential or mixed-residential use. The result could be elimination from consideration of an alternative with some interaction with such property that would ultimately impact significantly fewer –but not zero– lands than a new transmission line.

Further, the bill defines “alternative” through an exhaustive list that may inadvertently exclude existing and future alternative transmission technologies and limit the Commission’s discretion. For example, deployment of grid-enhancing technologies (GETs), a collection of advanced sensors, controls, and analytical tools designed to optimize grid performance, is not included in the definition. This approach is more narrow than current law, in which “[t]he Commission shall examine alternatives to the construction of a new transmission line in a service area, including [but not limited to] the use of an existing transmission line of another company.”²

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison, directly (landon.fahrig@maryland.gov, 410.931.1537).

¹ <https://www.rstreet.org/commentary/state-permitting-challenges-electric-transmission/>

² <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/public-utilities/division-i/title-7/subtitle-2/section-7-209/>