

John F Davis
69 W. Green St
Westminster, MD 21157
JohnFDavis3@gmail.com
443-340-0352
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Testimony in support of HB0081 - Real Property - Condemnation - Compensation for Farm and Agricultural Property (Protect Maryland Farm Lands Act)

To: Economic Matters Committee
From: John Davis

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Honorable Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 0081, which seeks to protect farmers and landowners by ensuring fair compensation in the event that eminent domain is used for infrastructure projects. As a landowner myself, I am directly affected by projects like the proposed MPRP, which seeks to build high-voltage power lines from Pennsylvania to Virginia, cutting through my property.

Eminent domain should never be used as a tool for unfairly taking land without ensuring that the compensation provided truly reflects the value that landowners have invested in their properties. While House Bill 0081 proposes compensation at 350% of the assessed land value, I firmly believe that this amount should be even greater to truly account for the long-term value of farmland and the personal, emotional, and financial toll it takes to lose part of one's livelihood.

The protection of farmers and landowners is critical not just for the economy but for the integrity of rural communities. Our land is not just a commodity; it is often our life's work and heritage. The proposed MPRP project, if approved, would have a significant and lasting impact on my property, and I know I am not alone in feeling that the compensation should be both fair and substantial.

I urge you to support HB0081 and ensure that landowners across the state are given the fair treatment they deserve in these situations. This bill will help guarantee that landowners are adequately compensated in situations where they are forced to relinquish their land for the public good, which is especially critical in projects like MPRP that could disrupt so many lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I sincerely hope you will approve this important bill to protect the interests of landowners throughout our state.

Sincerely,
John F Davis