



Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 18, 2025

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support of HB640 - Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – Overhead Transmission Lines – Conservation Easements

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in favor of HB640 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – Overhead Transmission Lines – Conservation Easements. The bill requires the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider the impact of overhead transmission lines on properties with existing conservation easements when reviewing applications for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). It also mandates that applicants explore alternative routes or modify proposed routes to minimize impacts on these protected lands.

Maryland's farmers work tirelessly to safeguard agricultural land for future generations, maintaining the state's agricultural heritage and ensuring food security for its citizens. Conservation easements play a vital role in these efforts by preserving farmland, protecting ecosystems, and supporting climate resilience. However, when infrastructure projects target these protected lands without proper consideration, it undermines the intent of preservation programs and discourages landowners from participating in them.

HB640 provides necessary safeguards by requiring the Public Service Commission to evaluate the impact of transmission lines on conservation easements and to consider alternative routes. This approach strikes a fair balance between infrastructure development and the preservation of Maryland's agricultural and environmental resources. It ensures that landowners' commitments to conservation are honored while promoting responsible planning for the state's energy needs.

This legislation is not just about protecting land—it is about maintaining trust in the preservation process, supporting sustainable agriculture, and upholding Maryland's broader environmental goals. I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB640 to protect our state's valuable conserved lands for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org, with any questions