



Educate. Advocate. Innovate.

Date: February 18, 2025
To: Members of the House Committee on Economic Matters
From: Grayson Middleton, Government Affairs Manager
Re: HB0657 - Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines – **Support**

Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, companies, and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware supports HB 657 and urges a favorable committee report.

HB 657 would require the Public Service Commission to examine alternatives to the construction of a new transmission line if the use of an alternative will best maintain historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas.

Over the last 50 years, the State of Maryland has spent considerable resources and attention on preserving agricultural lands. These programs were initiated to protect food supplies, preserve rural landscapes, and maintain a healthy ecosystem, among other reasons. These efforts have been enormously successful, and today the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) estimates that over 300,000 acres of agricultural land have been permanently preserved through their program.

However, agriculture faces constant development pressure. Recently, discussions on the siting of critically needed transmission lines have largely focused on agricultural areas. To ensure that the rich tradition of ag land preservation in Maryland endures and our commitments are upheld, we must make serious efforts to avoid preservation areas in development.

Preserving Maryland's agricultural and environmental resources requires policies that honor conservation commitments while supporting thoughtful growth. HB657 ensures that infrastructure expansion does not come at the expense of protected lands, reinforcing trust in preservation programs and aligning with the state's long-term sustainability goals. As such, we urge a favorable vote on HB 657.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at middleton@dcahicken.com or 410-490-3329.

Sincerely,

Grayson Middleton

Government Affairs Manager