



Maryland Native Plant Society

APPRECIATION CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Testimony: HB1270, Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines
Committee: Economic Matters
Hearing Date: March 6, 2025
Position: Oppose

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and honorable members of the Committee,

The Maryland Native Plant Society (MNPS) strongly opposes House Bill 1270, which would exempt certain areas in three State designated Wildlands (Big Savage Mountain, Bear Pen, and Dan's Mountain) for construction of overhead transmission lines.

In November 2013 MNPS sent comments to then Department of Natural Resources Secretary Gill, agreeing with his description of Maryland Wildlands as "the best of the best." Wildlands in Maryland provide:

- protection for rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals
- habitat for forest interior dwelling birds
- important core areas for species with large home ranges
- unmatched water quality benefits
- outdoor classrooms for students of all ages
- quiet areas for reflection seemingly far from development and technology
- unique hunting and fishing opportunities

MNPS endorsed the expansion of Maryland's Wildlands at that time so that additional irreplaceable natural areas would be "secured by the MD General Assembly for *present and future generations*." Just a few years later the *forever* protections on three of Maryland's most valuable Wildlands are threatened by the construction of overhead transmission lines.

These three Wildlands are State designated as Type1, "a primitive area which by its size and location is in effect untouched by urban civilization and can offer the experience of solitude and self-reliance." In addition to their other irreplaceable natural wealth, these areas contain remnant old growth forests, according to the MD State Wildlife Action Plan. This plan highlights a Table Mountain Pine in the Dans Mountain Wildlands that dates to 1678 and is part of the national Old-Growth Forest Network.

Maryland must continue to protect all our Wildlands, which make up less than 1% of our total land area (as specified in the DNR Lands Acreage Report). Please safeguard the Maryland Wildlands Preservation System by protecting these intact ecosystems and their priceless functions so critical for the health of Maryland's citizens and environment. The Maryland Native Plant Society requests that you oppose HB1270.

Respectfully,
Kirsten Hoffman
Treasurer, Maryland Native Plant Society

References:

Maryland Department of Natural Resources. 2015. Chapter 4, Maryland's Key Wildlife Habitats, 2015-2025 Maryland State Wildlife Action Plan.

https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/SWAP/SWAP_Chapter4.pdf

[Old-Growth Forest Network. Accessed 2025. Dans Mountain Old Growth – Dans Mountain Wildlife Management Area. https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/md-dans-mountain-old-growth-dans-mountain-wildlife-management-area](https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/md-dans-mountain-old-growth-dans-mountain-wildlife-management-area)

[Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Land Acquisitions and Planning. 2024. DNR Lands Acreage Report, DNR Publication # 05-120320-263.](https://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Documents/Stewardship/CurrentAcreageReport.pdf)

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