



## Maryland Farm Bureau

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February 18, 2025

**To:** House Economic Matters Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE: Support of HB1397 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – Overhead Transmission Lines – Grid Enhancing Technologies**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of HB1397 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity – Overhead Transmission Lines – Grid Enhancing Technologies. This bill would add grid enhancing technologies to the list of requirements the Public Service Commission must consider before taking final action on an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for the construction of an overhead transmission line.

The construction of transmission lines on agricultural land raises several significant concerns. One major issue is the loss of productive farmland, as transmission towers and easements reduce the amount of land available for cultivation. Additionally, the soil can become compacted during construction, lowering its fertility and affecting crop yields. Farmers also face operational challenges, as large transmission structures can interfere with irrigation systems, disrupt crop patterns, and limit the movement of machinery, making farming less efficient. There are also environmental concerns, such as soil disturbance leading to erosion and the potential impact of herbicides used for vegetation control under the power lines.

Another key concern is the effect on land value and compensation. Farmers may not receive adequate financial compensation for land-use restrictions, and property values can decline due to the presence of transmission infrastructure. Health and safety risks are also a topic of debate, with concerns over exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF), though scientific research on long-term health effects remains inconclusive. Additionally, electrical hazards pose a risk to farm workers operating large machinery near high-voltage lines. Legal and ownership issues further complicate matters, as landowners often have limited control over easements, leading to disputes over compensation and access rights. Given these challenges, careful planning, fair compensation, and mitigation strategies are essential when building transmission lines on agricultural land.

HB1397 would add an additional safeguard on agricultural land from transmission line construction by encouraging reconductoring and upgrading of current transmission lines before the construction of new lines.

Sincerely,

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions