HB 829 SUPPORT

Public Utilities - Transmission Lines - Advanced Transmission Technologies

Economic Matters Committee
February 20th, 2025

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

I, Michael Goggin, Vice President of Grid Strategies LLC, an electric transmission policy consulting firm based in Washington, DC, write today in support of HB829. Our firm has administered the Working for Advanced Transmission Technologies (WATT) Coalition since it was formed in 2017 on behalf of Grid Enhancing Technology (GETs) vendors, energy generation, and utility members. We began this work because we saw the opportunity to use these tools to get significantly more transfer capacity out of the existing transmission grid. GETs often 20% or more additional headroom on the grid. Much of my work is on the value of large-scale transmission lines but GETs have an important role to play in unlocking capacity in the near term and optimizing infrastructure decisions moving forward. Grid Strategies also administers the Advancing Modern Powerlines (AMP) Coalition for High Performance Conductors (HPCs), which can double capacity on transmission rights-of-way when compared to traditional conductors. I have been working on transmission issues for more than 15 years, frequently testifying before Public Utility Commissions, and I have been elected to multiple committees for the North American Electric Reliability Corporation.

I strongly support the provision for utilities to study Advanced Transmission Technologies (ATTs) to reduce past and projected grid congestion. From 2019 to 2023, transmission congestion increased wholesale electricity prices in the PJM Interconnection by $5.675 billion. While it's not transparent how much those costs affected Maryland, reducing grid congestion will save ratepayers money. GETs can often reduce congestion by 40% or more – by not evaluating these technologies, utilities are leaving money on the table. The requirement for a regular study of the opportunity for these technologies to reduce congestion is a good step for utilities to take. In the long term, ATTs should be fully integrated into transmission planning and operations – tools in the toolbox. This legislation will help push towards that future. Utilities are not rewarded for reducing congestion through rates or any other mechanism, so a requirement is appropriate to unlock this value.

On the requirement for ATTs to be studied as alternatives to new lines, ATTs should primarily be considered to maximize the value of new infrastructure. The requirement for inclusion in CPCN applications should prioritize using ATTs to increase asset utilization and flexibility and reduce constraints during the planning and construction of new infrastructure.

I urge a favorable report on HB 829.