



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

February 18, 2025

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: Support of HB657 Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in favor of HB657 Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines. The bill requires 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.

HbB657 strengthens protections for Maryland's conserved lands by ensuring that infrastructure projects are carefully planned to minimize their impact on agricultural preservation and environmental conservation efforts. Conservation easements are a critical tool for safeguarding farmland, protecting natural resources, and promoting sustainable land use. However, these commitments are undermined when major infrastructure projects, such as transmission lines, disrupt preserved properties without adequate review or consideration of alternatives.

HB657 establishes a more responsible and balanced approach to infrastructure planning by requiring the Public Service Commission to assess the potential impacts of transmission lines on conservation easements and explore alternative routes. This common-sense measure respects the investments landowners, and the state has made in preservation while allowing for necessary infrastructure development in a way that minimizes harm to protected lands. By prioritizing careful planning, the bill helps maintain the integrity of conservation programs and encourages continued participation by landowners.

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.

I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB657 to protect our state's valuable conserved lands for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

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