



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

BILL NO.: House Bill 1270 – Wildlands Protection and Transmission Line Exemptions

COMMITTEE: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

HEARING DATE: March 6, 2025

SPONSOR: Delegate Hinebaugh

POSITION: Unfavorable

Testimony of Stop MPRP, Inc. in Opposition to House Bill 1270

Stop MPRP, Inc. respectfully submits this testimony in **opposition** to House Bill 1270. As an organization committed to protecting Maryland’s land, heritage, and communities from unnecessary and harmful transmission projects, we find this bill deeply concerning. HB1270 seeks to modify the designation of certain protected wildlands—Big Savage Mountain, Bear Pen, and Dan’s Mountain Wildlands—to allow for the construction of overhead transmission lines. This legislation sets a dangerous precedent by prioritizing transmission expansion over conservation protections that have been in place for decades.

Threat to Maryland’s Wildlands and Conservation Efforts

Maryland’s wildlands program was designed to safeguard the state’s most ecologically significant landscapes from industrial development. HB1270 undermines these protections by allowing a carve-out for transmission lines, which could invite further exemptions for other industrial projects in the future. If one exemption is granted, what will prevent additional requests to remove protections from other areas?

Severe Environmental and Ecological Consequences

The construction of high-voltage transmission lines requires extensive clearing of trees, soil disturbance, and habitat fragmentation. These wildlands provide crucial environmental services, including carbon sequestration, biodiversity preservation, and watershed protection. Transmission line projects introduce irreversible damage to these delicate ecosystems, displacing wildlife, increasing erosion, and threatening water quality.

Flawed Approach to Energy Infrastructure Planning

Maryland does not need to sacrifice its most protected lands to improve grid reliability. Smarter, more sustainable alternatives exist, including:

- **Placing transmission along existing rights-of-way** such as highways or rail corridors



- **Investing in grid optimization** to improve efficiency without expanding transmission footprints
- **Exploring undergrounding options** where new transmission is truly necessary

By preemptively removing wildland protections, HB1270 promotes an outdated and destructive model of transmission expansion instead of forward-thinking, responsible energy planning.

No Justification for Wildland Exemptions

HB1270 lacks a compelling rationale for why these wildlands should lose their protections. The bill does not provide evidence that alternative routes have been exhausted or that the proposed transmission infrastructure is the only possible solution. Granting this exemption without fully vetting all other options would be irresponsible and detrimental to Maryland’s environmental legacy.

Take Action: Submit Unfavorable Testimony

We urge the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB1270. This bill is unnecessary, environmentally harmful, and sets a dangerous precedent for conservation rollbacks in Maryland. Wildlands exist to be **permanently** protected—not selectively deregulated when it becomes convenient for developers.

Conclusion

Stop MPRP, Inc. strongly opposes HB1270 and calls on legislators to reject this misguided exemption. Maryland must remain committed to protecting its natural landscapes and seeking responsible, modern energy solutions that do not come at the expense of its most valuable ecological treasures.

Recommendation: We respectfully urge the Committee to **reject HB1270** and uphold Maryland’s conservation protections.

Respectfully submitted,

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