

Subject: STRONGLY OPPOSE HB1270

Dear Representatives,

My name is Winston Ernst and I am writing to the Committee today to voice my strong opposition to **HB1270** Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines. I am asking you to vote no on this bill.

Born and raised in Maryland, I have come to appreciate this great state for a variety of reasons. Like many fellow Marylanders I am especially fond of our clean water and fresh air, especially in Mountain Maryland. My love of this area began when I enrolled at Garrett College in the Winter of 2014. My immediate connection to the wild and scenic rivers and mountains of this region inspired me to be an advocate for public lands and parks.

Since graduating from Garrett College and Frostburg State University in 2019, I have built a career around education and outdoor recreation. I frequently lead 5 - 12 day expeditions canoeing on the Potomac and Youghiogheny Rivers and backpacking through Savage River State Forest, changing students' lives through challenge and discovery. Ecotourism has long been a booming industry in this part of Maryland, and will only continue to be a special attraction for future generations as more of our planet around us is developed or destroyed by human beings. Many of the areas that I frequently recreate in and led expeditions with students in would be affected by this Bill and that is very upsetting.

In closing, I strongly urge you to not pass this bill as this bill is counter to the intent of the Wildlands Preservation statute to preserve sensitive habitats unimpaired for future generations. Additionally, this bill undermines the law and process. This bill creates a new pathway for any willing delegate to submit bills for changes to wildland management, and authority is only granted to the Governor with public input. Lastly, I want to vocalize how disappointed I was to learn of no public engagement with this Bill. No public disclosure, meetings, or listening sessions have preceded the bill's introduction to the legislative committees in the House and Senate.

For the reasons listed above, and more, I urge you to vote no on HB1270. Thank you.

In Service,  
Winston Ernst  
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