

February 28, 2025

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

I am here today to speak in strong support of HB0829 because, without this legislation, Maryland will continue to prioritize corporate convenience over community well-being. This bill is not about stopping transmission development; it is about ensuring that when we expand our grid, we do so in a way that protects homeowners, preserves property rights, and minimizes unnecessary disruption.

Right now, transmission companies like PSEG are pushing projects like the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) without considering smarter alternatives—not because they don't exist, but because they do not want to take the time to pursue them. The result is that homeowners face land seizures, property values plummet, public school funding suffers, and communities are left with environmental devastation, all in the name of expediency.

HB0829 demands common-sense accountability by requiring utilities to justify their expansion plans before seizing land and imposing unnecessary costs on ratepayers. PSEG has shown time and again that they will not do this voluntarily. When Delegate Mangione inquired about the possibility of using existing infrastructure, PSEG admitted that they had not explored that option at all. Only when the community demanded answers did they conduct a hasty study to validate their predetermined stance—one that conveniently supported their original plan. The speed of this so-called “analysis” raises serious concerns about its thoroughness and sincerity. If they were truly committed to exploring alternatives, wouldn't that have been the first step in their planning, rather than something they scrambled to do after public outrage? HB0829 closes this loophole by ensuring that companies like PSEG can no longer ignore proven alternatives in favor of the path of least resistance.

For my family and many others, this is not just a policy debate—it is our reality. The moment I found out that MPRP was threatening my home and my community, my life was thrown into chaos. How do you plan for a future when you don't even know if your home will still belong to you? I have had to restructure my life around fighting this project. I have spent hours away from my family, sacrificing time, sleep, and peace of mind just to demand the basic fairness that utilities should be required to justify their actions before they take what isn't theirs.

And I am not alone. This project has upended lives across the region. Neighbors who planned to retire in their homes are now living in uncertainty. Families who invested everything into their properties are being told that their sacrifice is irrelevant in the face of

corporate profits. I hear the stories of parents struggling to explain to their children that the place where they feel safest might be taken away not because it is necessary, but because it is convenient for a corporation? Our elected leaders are being forced to clean up the mess PSEG created simply because they refused to do their due diligence.

If this bill does not pass, Marylanders will continue to pay the price for utility companies' unchecked power. Homeowners will see their property values plummet, as no one wants to live under massive transmission lines, and many families' largest financial asset—their home—will be devalued through no fault of their own. Property rights will be stripped away as the ability to seize land through eminent domain becomes a rubber-stamped corporate process rather than a true test of necessity. Local schools will suffer because property values drive public school funding through property taxes, and when values decline, so does the tax base that supports teachers, students, and school programs. The environment will be sacrificed for corporate expediency as PSEG chooses the fastest route, not the best one. Instead of modernizing existing transmission infrastructure, they plan to clearcut, disrupt local ecosystems, and carve a path of destruction in the name of progress.

This is not progress. This is corporate convenience disguised as necessity.

PSEG and PJM do not want to take the time to consider advanced transmission technologies, high-performance conductors, or energy storage solutions, even though these options exist and are being used successfully in other states. They do not want to take the time to explore demand-response programs, distributed energy resources, or grid enhancements that could solve the problem without new construction. Why? Because that would take time and effort, and it is easier to steamroll communities than innovate.

This is why HB0829 is so critical. It ensures that utilities must justify every expansion decision before forcing new infrastructure on homeowners. If Maryland is serious about responsible energy planning, economic fairness, and environmental stewardship, then HB0829 must pass. Without it, utilities will continue making ratepayers fund unnecessary projects, homeowners bear the financial burden, and communities suffer the consequences.

This is a chance for Maryland to be a leader. It is an opportunity to put an end to unchecked transmission expansion, to choose smarter, more efficient energy solutions, to protect homeowners, property rights, and local economies, and to demand accountability, transparency, and long-term planning in our energy policies.

I urge you to support HB0829 and protect the people you were elected to serve. Thank you.