HB0829 - SUPPORT
Frances Stewart, MD
Elders Climate Action Maryland
frances.stewart6@gmail.com
301-718-0446

HB0829, Public Utilities – Transmission Lines – Advanced Transmission Technologies

Meeting of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

March 26, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge a favorable report on HB0829.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

Each day, we see the climate crisis more clearly. We know that Maryland is at risk for sea level rise, flooding from intense rainfall, heat waves, and other extreme weather events. Maryland can also be a leader in moving us to a safer, cleaner future where we all can thrive. The clean energy transition is an essential part of that future.

Maryland imports about 40% of the electricity we consume from other states in the PJM grid. Unfortunately, the grid is inadequate for current and future needs. That increases costs for ratepayers, decreases reliability, and makes it difficult to add the new clean energy resources we need.

But building new transmission lines is a slow and very expensive process. Fortunately, advanced transmission technologies can maximize transmission through the existing grid quickly and at a much lower cost. Those technologies

include grid enhancing technologies (GETS), high-performance conductors, and using storage as transmission.

These technologies may be new to Maryland, but they have been in widespread use for years. GETS technologies were developed in the 1970's and 80's and are used by power companies in Indiana, Ohio, New York, and the United Kingdom. Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, India, and China have done large scale reconductoring projects using high-performance conductors. Storage projects in California and Wisconsin are being used as transmission assets. These technologies have been shown to be safe, reliable, and cost-effective ways to increase transmission capacity in much less time than building new lines.

Other states are recognizing the potential of these technologies. In 2023, Montana passed a law that provided an incentive for utilities to use high-performance conductors. In 2024, Minnesota passed a law requiring consideration of advanced transmission technologies in transmission planning.

HB829 requires that utilities identify existing and foreseeable areas of grid congestion, plan infrastructure investments to avoid emergency construction, and maximize transmission through the existing grid by using advanced transmission technologies.

Any applicant for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for a new transmission line would be required to carefully consider opportunities to defer or avoid the new construction. The bill also requires transmission line planning by owners and operators of overhead transmission lines.

In their request for a CPCN to construct a new overhead transmission line, applicants would need to include an analysis of alternatives to the new line. The alternatives include the use of advanced transmission technologies, alternative routes, changes to the existing distribution system that could avoid the need for the new transmission line, an analysis of the proposed transmission line route and the consideration of alternative routes. The application would also need to include the cost to ratepayers and the impact of the proposed line on the environment.

HB0829 also requires owners and operators of overhead transmission lines to plan for future congestion and determine the degree to which advanced transmission technologies can address this congestion. Every two years starting in December 2025, the owner or operator of an overhead transmission line must identify line congestion in the preceding three years, anticipated transmission congestion in the

next five years, projected costs to ratepayers from this congestion, and the opportunity to use advanced transmission technologies to address the congestion and reduce costs.

HB0829 provides many benefits to Maryland through its use of technological advances and advanced grid planning. It reduces costs to ratepayers, increases throughput on existing lines, reduces the need for costly emergency construction of high voltage transmission lines, such as the $796 million new transmission line designed to facilitate import of electricity upon the closure of the Brandon Shores and Wagner coal generating station, and increases reliability of our electricity supply.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on HB0829.

Thank you.