Testimony in Support of SB 952 Presented by Bryan Price Maryland State Senate Hearing on SB 952

Chair, Vice Chair, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 952 (SB 952). My name is Bryan Price, and I am a Maryland resident committed to ensuring that our state pursues responsible, cost-effective, and innovative energy solutions. SB 952 is a critical piece of legislation that prioritizes modernization over unnecessary expansion by requiring the Public Service Commission (PSC) to evaluate Grid-Enhancing Technologies (GETs) before approving new overhead transmission lines.

For decades, the default response to grid reliability concerns has been to build more highvoltage transmission lines. This approach has led to massive infrastructure projects that consume land, drive up costs for ratepayers, and disrupt communities and farmland. However, advancements in transmission technology have provided smarter alternatives. SB 952 ensures that these alternatives are fully considered before utilities are allowed to push forward with expensive and invasive new transmission corridors.

Grid-Enhancing Technologies (GETs) include a range of innovations that improve the efficiency, capacity, and reliability of existing power lines. High-performance conductors, for example, can significantly increase the electricity-carrying capacity of current transmission infrastructure without requiring new routes or additional land. Similarly, energy storage solutions can act as transmission resources by balancing supply and demand without the need for expanded transmission corridors. These technologies allow for better grid management and optimization while minimizing the environmental and economic impacts associated with new transmission projects.

SB 952 is critical because it compels the PSC to assess whether GETs can meet Maryland's electricity needs before defaulting to new construction. This shift in evaluation criteria will save ratepayers money by reducing the financial burden of costly new infrastructure projects that often result in higher utility bills. Expanding transmission infrastructure frequently leads to land seizures through eminent domain, encroaching on farmland, conservation lands, and private properties. By prioritizing upgrades over expansion, SB 952 protects landowners and natural resources from unnecessary disruptions. Additionally, by integrating advanced technologies such as dynamic line rating, topology optimization, and

power flow control devices, Maryland can enhance grid reliability and efficiency without waiting years for new transmission lines to be built. This means a faster, smarter, and more resilient grid that does not force landowners into legal battles over their property.

The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) highlights the urgent need for SB 952. PJM Interconnection and its utility partners have long pushed for this massive 70-mile, 500,000-volt transmission line, claiming it is essential for Maryland's grid reliability. However, recent developments prove otherwise. The latest PJM TEAC meeting revealed that the MPRP will bypass Maryland entirely, instead connecting Virginia to Pennsylvania without terminating at a single Maryland substation. This revelation confirms that Marylanders were expected to sacrifice land and property rights for a project that does not even serve their communities. If GETs had been properly considered from the outset, this project might never have gained traction in Maryland at all.

Delegate Nino Mangione has been instrumental in exposing the lack of due diligence behind projects like the MPRP. When he questioned PSEG on whether they had explored using existing infrastructure instead of building new transmission lines, the company admitted that they had not even considered this option until public outcry forced them to. SB 952 ensures that no future project moves forward without first evaluating whether Maryland's existing infrastructure can be optimized with grid-enhancing technologies.

The time to act is now. Maryland should not continue approving large-scale transmission projects based on outdated models when smarter, more efficient options exist. SB 952 aligns Maryland's energy policy with the principles of cost-efficiency, sustainability, and landowner protection, ensuring that transmission development only occurs when absolutely necessary.

I urge the committee to support SB 952 and take a bold step toward modernizing Maryland's electric grid while protecting ratepayers, landowners, and natural resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan Price

21221 York Road Parkton, MD 21120 Bryan.s.price@gmail.com 410.302.8074