MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

March 6, 2025

SUPPORT: SB 952 - Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - Overhead Transmission Lines - Grid Enhancing Technologies

Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB 952 - Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity - Overhead Transmission Lines - Grid Enhancing Technologies, and we thank Senator West for introducing this bill.

SB 952 is a sensible step in the development of transmission infrastructure, particularly as Maryland seeks to increase grid stability. Grid enhancing technologies (GETs) provide cost-effective, efficient, and flexible alternatives to building new transmission lines. GETs can improve the capacity, efficiency, reliability, and resilience of both new and existing transmission infrastructure, often at a lower cost and faster implementation than traditional upgrades. Unlike traditional transmission line projects, which can take years to plan, site, permit, and gain community acceptance, GETs can typically be deployed more quickly, offering a faster solution to address grid constraints. States like Virginia and Minnesota have already incorporated GETs into their transmission planning process.

SB 952 requires the PSC to consider the need to meet existing and future demand for electric service, the alternative routes that an applicant considered, and the use of GETs as an alternative to constructing a transmission line before approving a CPCN. This bill should be considered alongside HB 829, which goes further. In addition to GETs, HB 829 includes the consideration of other advanced transmission technologies, such as high-performance conductors and storage used as transmission. This allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the many technologies readily available that may be cheaper, more effective, and better for the environment than constructing a new transmission line.

GETs and other advanced transmission technologies play a crucial role in integrating variable renewable energy sources into the grid, bridging the gap between current infrastructure and the grid needed to meet increasing electricity demand and achieve the state's climate goals. A recent report by RMI highlighted that GETs could enable the integration of 6.6 GW of new clean energy onto PJM's grid, which would support regional reliability and save approximately $1 billion in production costs annually. As the development of low-cost wind, solar, and battery storage projects accelerates, GETs and other transmission technologies can address the challenge of limited space on the grid, expedite interconnection processes, and reduce delays. These technologies ensure a smoother transition to a cleaner energy future, enhance grid reliability, and help reduce costs.

GETs and other advanced transmission technologies have less land use impacts compared to traditional transmission lines, meaning less disruption to communities and the environment. They can also improve grid access and reliability for underserved or vulnerable communities, ensuring that energy justice is a priority in the state's transition to a more sustainable energy system.

Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this bill.