

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman and Members of the Senate  
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**Re: Testimony - Unfavorable - Senate Bill 399 - Natural Resources - Wildland Areas -  
Transmission Lines**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment  
Committee,

I am respectfully submitting this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 399 - Natural Resources -  
Wildland Areas - Transmission Lines. This bill will provide an exemption for a new transmission  
line by NextEra Energy through three sensitive State Wildlands in Western Maryland in advance  
of a Public Service Commission (PSC) Public Certificate of Convenience and Necessity.

The proposed exemption in SB399 threatens some of Maryland's most sensitive and pristine  
public lands, including: the first Wildland designated in 1973 on Big Savage Mountain, the Bear  
Pen Wildland in Savage River State Forest, which supports a native brook trout stream, and the  
Dan's Mountain Wildland, an Audubon State Significant Bird Area. A NextEra transmission line  
would result in the disturbance and loss of forest and wildlife habitat in Maryland's most  
important ecological areas protected by the Maryland General Assembly.

The passage of SB399 would mean that the Legislature has pre-approved an exemption for a  
future, yet-to-be determined alignment for the development of a NextEra transmission line  
through the State's Wildlands if the PSC issues a Certificate in the future. This legislation is  
unnecessary as the Wildlands regulations provide for a process to authorize a transmission line  
exemption in a Wildland, but the regulations include an important requirement for public notice  
and a hearing (COMAR 08.01.02.05).

The Maryland Wildlands Preservation System is the equivalent of the federal Wilderness  
system, preserving the most pristine and ecologically sensitive state lands remaining in  
Maryland. As a 28-year employee and retiree of the Maryland Department of Natural  
Resources, I believe that our work with the citizens of Maryland and the Maryland General  
Assembly to designate and preserve Maryland's Wildlands for today and future generations was  
some of the most important conservation work of our careers. Please protect this natural  
resource legacy, and the requirement for public involvement in the decision making process, by  
voting against SB399. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nita Settina

1255 Crummell Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403