



Maryland Farm Bureau

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March 6, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of SB955 – Overhead Transmission Lines - Eminent Domain**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I provide written testimony in support of SB955 Overhead Transmission Lines - Eminent Domain. This bill prohibits a person constructing an overhead transmission line from exercising a right of condemnation to acquire property encumbered by a conservation easement, authorizes a property owner to bring an action for damages incurred as a result of a condemnation proceedings, and requires that reasonable counsel fees be awarded to counsel for the defendant in a condemnation proceeding and that certain court costs be charged against the plaintiff.

Maryland farmers work tirelessly to preserve agricultural land for future generations, safeguarding the state's agricultural heritage and ensuring food security for its citizens. Similarly, conservation easements are vital tools for protecting Maryland's natural resources and maintaining ecological balance. Eminent domain actions that target these lands undermine the very purpose of these preservation efforts and set a dangerous precedent.

The Maryland Farm Bureau's policies align strongly with the principles set forth in SB955. We oppose the taking of preserved agricultural land by eminent domain, as well as the taking of land protected by conservation easements. These actions not only diminish the effectiveness of preservation programs but also erode the trust and participation of landowners in such programs. SB955 provides essential safeguards to ensure that preserved land remains protected, as originally intended.

This legislation is not only about protecting land; it is about honoring commitments made to Maryland's farmers and landowners who have voluntarily entered into preservation agreements. It also serves to uphold the state's broader goals of fostering sustainable agriculture, mitigating climate change, and conserving natural habitats.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org with any questions