

## Testimony in Support of SB 953

Presented by Bryan Price

Maryland State Senate Hearing on SB 953

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 953 (SB 953). My name is Bryan Price, and I am a Maryland resident committed to ensuring that our state's energy policies prioritize affordability, reliability, and sustainability while safeguarding Maryland's communities from unnecessary and destructive transmission expansion. SB 953 is a critical step toward achieving these goals by establishing a Task Force to Develop a Realistic Electricity Plan for Maryland and implementing a temporary moratorium on new transmission line construction.

Maryland's increasing dependence on out-of-state electricity has placed an unfair financial burden on its residents. As part of PJM Interconnection, Maryland imports a significant portion of its energy, making ratepayers vulnerable to volatile wholesale energy prices, rising capacity market costs, and economic disadvantages that send jobs and investment dollars to other states instead of fostering local energy generation. SB 953 is essential to ensuring that Maryland transitions toward energy independence rather than doubling down on costly and inefficient transmission expansion.

This bill creates a Task Force to study Maryland's electricity needs for 2026, 2030, 2035, and 2040, charting a path toward reducing our dependence on imported electricity to no more than 25% by 2040. The task force will assess strategies such as increasing in-state energy production through expanded nuclear power, renewable energy, and energy storage solutions while modernizing the existing transmission and distribution system to improve efficiency rather than building new, costly lines. This approach prioritizes Maryland consumers over out-of-state utilities.

One of the most important provisions of SB 953 is the temporary moratorium on new transmission line construction from July 1, 2025, to May 1, 2026. This pause is critical because Maryland must optimize existing infrastructure before rubber-stamping new transmission projects that primarily serve out-of-state interests. The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) is a prime example of why this moratorium is necessary. Initially proposed as a project to enhance Maryland's grid reliability, the recent PJM TEAC meeting has confirmed what many of us suspected: **The MPRP will now bypass Maryland**

altogether. The new plan terminates the proposed line outside of Maryland, avoids providing power to Maryland, and instead directly connects Virginia to Pennsylvania, proving that the devastation of some of Maryland's most scenic and historic areas is merely collateral damage for Virginia's data center expansion.

Delegate Nino Mangione has played a crucial role in exposing the inconsistencies and failures in the MPRP's planning. When he pressed PSEG on whether they had considered upgrading existing infrastructure instead of constructing new lines, the company admitted they had not even evaluated this option until forced by public outcry. Only after significant pressure did they scramble to justify their predetermined stance, confirming that these projects often move forward without proper scrutiny. SB 953 ensures that projects like MPRP are given the full, transparent review they deserve rather than being rushed through at the expense of Maryland's landowners, ratepayers, and local governments.

The consequences of unchecked transmission expansion extend far beyond financial costs. Families who have lived on and cultivated their land for generations now face the possibility of losing it to eminent domain for projects that do not even serve their state. Property values will decline, farmland will be disrupted, and Maryland's environmental commitments will be undermined. Farmers, conservationists, and homeowners should not be forced into legal battles just to protect what is rightfully theirs. With SB 953, Maryland can take control of its energy future, ensuring that decisions about new transmission projects are based on necessity, not corporate convenience.

The MPRP is just one example of a broader issue. PSEG and PJM have already indicated their intent to expand transmission across Maryland, including into the Eastern Shore, threatening even more farmland and rural communities. If we do not act now, these projects will continue to multiply, burdening Marylanders with higher costs and irreversible environmental damage. The passage of SB 953 sends a clear message that Maryland will not be a pass-through for out-of-state energy interests. Instead of bowing to corporate pressure, we must invest in undergrounding power lines, grid-enhancing technologies, and distributed energy generation to build a truly modern and resilient energy system.

SB 953 is not just another energy bill: it is a defining moment for Maryland's energy future. If we fail to act, we risk higher energy costs, continued overreliance on out-of-state power, weakened local energy security, and the unnecessary destruction of communities and farmland. Maryland lawmakers must take a stand for responsible energy planning and put the brakes on reckless transmission expansion.

I urge the committee to support SB 953 and take a bold step toward an energy strategy that prioritizes Maryland's residents, landscapes, and long-term sustainability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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