

Subject: Opposition to Senate Bill 399

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 399.

Bear Pen Wildland is home to the leatherwood, a rare and threatened plant species. It is expected to become endangered soon. This area's streams provide habitat for diverse salamanders and brook trout, the only trout species native to Maryland. These species, and all those in this vulnerable area, deserve to be protected.

There is sound reason behind this area's designation as wildlands. It is nothing short of alarming that the necessary studies have not been completed to ensure this can be done safely, without harm to the species that are meant to be protected in the first place.

Wildlands are defined as "areas of state-owned land or water that have retained their wilderness character or contain rare or vanishing species of plant or animal life or similar features worthy of preservation."

Rare or vanishing species deserve to be protected, not trampled over for transmission lines. I urge you to carefully consider this exemption and the long-lasting impact it could have on our spectacular surroundings here in Western Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Desiree Bullard  
Resident of Western Maryland