

Testimony in Support of SB 951

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brenda Myers, and I am writing today to strongly support Senate Bill 951 (SB 951), a transformative piece of legislation that will give Maryland greater control over its energy future, protect rural communities, and prevent unnecessary transmission expansion projects like the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP). SB 951 represents a long-overdue shift in how Maryland manages its energy generation and transmission infrastructure.

SB 951 reverses Maryland's outdated approach of separating electricity generation from transmission operations. Historically, investor-owned utilities (IOUs) in Maryland were required to purchase electricity from third-party generators and depend on regional transmission organizations, such as PJM Interconnection, to distribute it. This reliance on PJM has led to an overemphasis on massive, high-voltage transmission projects that cut through farmland, forests, and communities rather than prioritizing localized generation solutions.

If passed, SB 951 would allow Maryland's investor-owned utilities—such as BGE, Pepco, and Potomac Edison—to:

Own and operate their own power plants—reducing dependence on PJM-driven transmission expansion.

Build and control their own transmission lines—ensuring upgrades prioritize existing corridors rather than forcing new lines through rural landscapes.

Improve reliability without unnecessary infrastructure—preventing PJM from using questionable regional reliability claims to justify projects like the MPRP.

By restoring this authority to Maryland's utilities, SB 951 offers a pathway to a more localized, efficient, and less destructive energy system.

The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) is a prime example of the damage caused by our current energy structure. This high-voltage transmission project, championed by PJM Interconnection and Exelon, threatens to seize private property, destroy farmland, and fragment rural communities—all under the questionable premise of addressing future energy demand.

1. Cutting Out the Middleman (PJM)

Currently, PJM Interconnection—a regional transmission operator with no accountability to Maryland ratepayers—determines where and when transmission lines are built. SB 951 would empower Maryland utilities to meet their own reliability needs without waiting for PJM's approval or relying on out-of-state generation. This significantly reduces the need for transmission expansions like MPRP.

2. Shifting Focus to Local Generation

The main argument for MPRP is that Maryland needs additional transmission capacity to meet growing energy demands. However, if local utilities can own and operate their own generation, the need to import electricity from distant sources is significantly reduced. SB 951 fosters: **Increased distributed energy resources (DERs)** such as solar, small-scale natural gas, and nuclear generation. **A focus on microgrids and local reliability solutions** rather than sprawling high-voltage transmission projects. **Less dependence on PJM's costly, centralized grid planning**, ensuring Maryland ratepayers are not footing the bill for unnecessary projects.

3. Preventing the Destruction of Farmland & Forests

SB 951 encourages investment in upgrading existing infrastructure rather than carving new transmission corridors through Maryland's protected landscapes. This means: **No new easements cutting through agricultural lands** that are vital to Maryland's economy and food security. **No deforestation or habitat destruction** to make way for unnecessary high-voltage towers. **No abuse of eminent domain** to seize private property for corporate profit-driven infrastructure.

Instead of expanding transmission lines indiscriminately, SB 951 ensures that utilities maximize the use of existing corridors, reinforcing infrastructure in a way that is far less invasive and far more sustainable.

Maryland stands at an energy crossroads. If we allow the current system to continue unchecked, projects like MPRP will only become more frequent, eroding rural landscapes and burdening ratepayers with unnecessary costs. SB 951 presents a real opportunity to challenge the status quo and take back control over Maryland's energy future.

No more giving PJM unchecked authority over Maryland's energy decisions. No more sacrificing communities for transmission profits. A smarter, more sustainable energy future is possible—let's fight for it.

I urge this committee to pass SB 951 to ensure that Maryland's energy future is driven by local needs, not by the interests of transmission developers and regional grid operators.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brenda Myers

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