

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Budget and Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 302
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3575
800-492-7122 Ext. 3575
Karen.Young@senate.state.md.us

District Office
253 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701
301-662-8520

Honorable Brian Feldman
Honorable Cheryl Kagan
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

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SB0853 Public Service Commission - Transmission Line Siting - Limitations

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of this committee,

The growth of high tech, high power industries threatens our landscape with the proliferation of transmission lines needed to supply the electricity these facilities demand. Each line will require the expropriation of land for a project that may not even serve the needs of Maryland. SB0853 places priorities and guardrails on where transmission lines can be built and creates specific reporting requirements to increase transparency.

Transmission lines will continue to be needed and built. This bill address concerns over eminent domain by compacting the building of transmission lines within existing rights of way. SB0853 prohibits the Public Service Commission from approving new transmission lines unless the applicant can prove the right of way is not sufficient. If the PSC finds the existing right of way is insufficient, then they may approve a new line to be built not more than one-quarter mile from the existing right of way and minimizing the impact the new line will have on the surrounding landscape.

SB0853 also increases transparency by first requiring local electricity distributors to report to the PSC on:

- A) Forecasted load growth and what resources the company has to address it;

- B) Where they expect the growth to be and their plans to meet it;
- C) Anticipated impacts of state and federal regulations;
- D) Their use of demand-response practices to reduce stress at peak times;
- E) A comprehensive evaluation of initiatives to connect Tier 1 Renewable energy generation to reduce stress; and
- F) A list of projects the company is working on that require PJM approval.

This information helps inform a report the PSC must then provide to the General Assembly. In the PSC's report, they must additionally include the status of projects promoting the specific goals of:

- A) Energy efficiency;
- B) Meeting anticipated increases in load;
- C) Incorporation of energy storage technology to support the reliability of the grid;
- D) Grid resiliency and demand-response practices;
- E) Increased use of distributed energy resources; and
- F) Stakeholder participation in ongoing electric system planning

Altogether, this bill will protect Marylanders. First, by limiting the impact transmission lines will have on our communities. Second, it will make vital information available to the General Assembly, our counties, and communities needed for our increasingly electrified future.

I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Senator Karen Lewis Young