

SB483 - Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines

Position: Favorable with Amendment

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Dear Chair Feldman and fellow members of the EEE Committee,

### **The Problem: Maryland's Growing Energy Crisis**

Maryland is increasingly dependent on imported electricity, leaving our residents vulnerable to:

- High electricity prices driven by capacity market costs.
- Grid reliability risks as we rely on out-of-state generation instead of investing in local, resilient power solutions.
- Unnecessary transmission expansion, which can disrupt farmland, rural communities, and environmental preservation efforts.

### **Why do I support SB483?**

SB0483 expands the **Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC)**'s responsibility to examine alternatives to constructing new transmission lines. It mandates that before approving a new transmission project, the PSC must evaluate whether alternatives could:

- Utilize existing transmission infrastructure.
- Promote economic and efficient service.
- Preserve historical, environmental, or agricultural areas.
- Avoid disrupting planned growth areas and residential communities.

Additionally, the bill explicitly outlines alternatives that must be considered, including:

- **Using existing transmission lines** owned by another company.
- **Reconductoring (upgrading) existing transmission lines** instead of constructing new ones.
- **Undergrounding transmission lines** instead of building additional overhead structures.

### **Encouraging Smarter Energy Infrastructure**

Rather than defaulting to the outdated approach of building more overhead transmission lines, SB0483 promotes **modern, efficient solutions** such as undergrounding and reconductoring. These approaches not only minimize environmental and community disruption but also **improve grid resilience** against extreme weather events.

### **A Future Without Unnecessary Transmission Lines**

SB0483 represents a **new path forward**—one where Maryland prioritizes **efficient, community-friendly energy solutions** over the profit-driven motives of transmission developers. By supporting this bill, we can **protect our land, our homes, and our way of life from unnecessary and harmful energy infrastructure projects**.

### Why do I suggest an Amendment?

Strike line 13 from page 2 of the bill, and remove “using existing right-of-way”. Ideally, we do not want any new lines built through our neighborhoods of Kingsville and Upper Falls; in fact, if new lines are required, **they must be placed underground**. A second set of power lines due to the retirement of Brandon Shores running directly through our neighborhoods will increase the likelihood of a wildfire exponentially. **Kingsville, MD cannot become the next Paradise, CA.** In fact, the state of California has been moving towards [undergrounding their power lines](#) after the devastating wildfires. The very state which has influenced so much of our climate policies in Maryland has learned their lesson about placing profits over people. 99% of homes in Kingsville are in [DIRECT EXPOSURE](#) to wildfire risk and may be ignited by vegetation, flying embers, or nearby structures.

The effects of EMF are of grave concern to us. For background, BGE obtained a right-of-way in 1919 on our property. A lattice type tower with 2 electric lines was initially installed. The tower and lines remained until 2016 when they installed a higher 96' tower and 6 high voltage power lines (each at 230,000 volts). In 2020 another 6 high voltage power lines (each at 230,000 volts) were installed. Within 4 years, BGE is proposing to install a second set of towers and add 12 high voltage power lines (each at 230,000 volts). That brings the total number of high voltage power lines to 24 (each at 230,000 volts).

According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and other regulatory bodies, the safe exposure limit for EMF radiation is typically set at 0.08 microteslas ( $\mu T$ ) for residential areas and 0.4  $\mu T$  for occupational settings. We recently took a gaussmeter reading of the EMF levels on our property and it measured at 7.32 ( $\mu T$ ) - as you can see in the attached photo. Given the various studies which suggest EMF exposure may be associated with health risks, we are asking you to consider the health risks these additional lines pose to our children, grandchildren, and community. We are continuously exposed to risks of EMFs from the powerlines, every minute of every day, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Not only are we constantly exposed, BGE has increased the exposure by 1200% within the last 10 years.

**I ask for a favorable report with a small amendment to SB483.**

