

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

Position: Favorable

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Dear Chair Feldman and fellow members of the EEE Committee,

I write today to ask for a favorable report for SB483. I represent community members of Kingsville and Upper Falls, Maryland who are dismayed at the proposed new transmission lines due to the retirement of Brandon Shores Power Plant. We are located in both Harford and Baltimore Counties and live outside the URDL (Urban-Rural Demarcation Line). As a result, there are no fire hydrants near our homes because we live in between the Little and Big Gunpowder Rivers. Much of Harford County nestled along this transmission line route also does not have fire hydrants. The neighborhoods of Jerusalem Mills, Kingsville, Long Green Woods, Pleasant Hills, Fallston. And North Bel Air are full of historic areas and homes - many from the 1700's and 1800's. Harry Dorsey Gough's Perry Hall Mansion, Jerusalem Mill, Saint John's Parish, Jericho Farm, Ishmael Day's House and the Jericho Covered Bridge. Each time one of these historic landmarks is lost they cannot be recovered. One case in point is the childhood home of the Von Paris family. Sadly, the main house at Arcadia was lost to a fire on January 15, 2020 as reported by the [media](#). Our community was devastated by this tragedy.

My family owns Jubilee which is another historic home in the Kingsville area. Built in 1771, we sit directly next to the Gunpowder Falls State Park. A second set of power lines 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.

I ask the committee to consider this important piece of legislation which will require the PSC to examine alternatives to the construction of new transmission lines. Our community is rallying together against the Brandon Shores Retirement Mitigation Project and we will not rest until our land, homes, and energy future are protected. In addition to the already rising energy costs we face, we cannot sustain another rate hike on our BGE bills. The new transmission lines will result in a new RMR fee on our bills as well as the surcharge to construct this \$800 million project. This is unconscionable at a time when Marylanders are facing tax hikes, struggling with inflation, and simply cannot afford to heat their homes or keep the lights on - not when there are alternatives that can be explored!

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Ullmann, District 7A, Kingsville