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## **Written Testimony in Opposition of SB0399**

**To:** Education, Energy, and Environment Committee  
**From:** Ash Miller

Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

My name is Ash Miller and I am a resident of Greenbelt, Maryland. I am writing to express my opposition for SB0399, which would remove the wildland designation from areas of Maryland's protected forests in order to construct powerlines.

As an environmental educator and someone who was raised in and cherishes the area impacted by this bill, my priority is to preserve these wildlands for future generations, as removing the forest in these areas is a damaging and irreversable decision.

Forest segmentation is a major contributor to the decline of several Maryland animal species. To paraphrase Maryland's State Wildlife Action Plan, habitat loss is the single greatest threat to biodiversity in the US. From the time of European colonization to 1993, Maryland's forests and wetland habitats have been reduced by half. This trend will continue relentlessly, unless we make decisions to actively protect our wildlands in the present.

The benefits of MPRP lie mostly with our neighbouring states, and do not provide enough of a benefit to Marylanders to outweigh the damage caused to our wildlands. Why should Marylanders pay the price to support Virginia's expanding data centers? I support alternative measures to these powerlines, such as improving current infrastructure and microgrids at data centers. Fine alternatives already exist, and we need to consider them more heavily.

I respectfully urge you to oppose SB0399 in order to protect Maryland's natural history. Thank you for your time and attention. I can be contacted at the email address listed.