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Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



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Joint Committees
Administrative, Executive,
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Land Preservation

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Williamsport, Maryland

Senate Bill 399 – Natural Resources – Wildlands – Overhead Transmission Lines

January 22, 2025

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 399. NextEra Energy Transmission is proposing to build the MidAtlantic Resiliency Link, also known as “MARL”. The project is 105-mile 500 kV transmission line from proposed from Pennsylvania to Virginia, including through Allegany and Garrett Counties in my district. The transmission line is being developed because the regional grid operator, PJM, determined through extensive analysis that it is needed to secure reliable electricity in the region. It will ensure our hospitals, schools and homes have the electricity we need in the coming years. The transmission line will also provide significant economic benefit to the region. Over the 40 years of operation, the project will generate more than \$450 million in revenue for Allegany and Garrett Counties. This impact is significant to economically challenged counties within my district.

I am fortunate to attach my name to SB399 because it provides my constituents from District One as much transparency as possible, in the early process, as to avoid the controversies that happen in similar projects downstate.

I would like to compliment NextEra’s public outreach during these initial stages of the line’s development. The company has held more than 50 meetings with local stakeholders to educate them and seek feedback. They will continue their outreach campaign in the coming months with open houses in the community and will then file an application with the Public Service Commission (PSC) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for approval of the transmission line. The PSC holds the authority to review and approve transmission lines in Maryland.

NextEra explained to me that one of the possible routes through the district would parallel an existing Right of Way for a FirstEnergy transmission line. That path made sense to me because it would have the least impact to the homes, businesses and viewshed in the community. Senate Bill 399 preserves the option for the line to stay as close to the existing FirstEnergy line. The FirstEnergy line was put into operation before the state had a wildlands designation. Therefore, I am here today seeking legislative approval via Senate Bill 399 to withdraw a small portion of wildlands from that designation so that the MARL line can parallel the FirstEnergy line. It is very important to note that If the MARL transmission

line is not approved during the CPCN process or chooses to take another route, this legislation is not available for any other transmission company to cross the wildlands.

Thank you for your consideration and I ask you to support Senate Bill 399.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike McKay", written in a cursive style.

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties