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SB0399 Natural Resources - Wildland Areas - Overhead Transmission Lines

Education, Energy, and the Environment

**UNFAVORABLE**

The Wildlands of western Maryland are just that, wild lands. However, the wildlands of western Maryland are also an entire ecological system consisting of above and below ground elements creating the whole. Wildlands' forest soils are comprised of many forms of life, micro-organisms, interacting with mycorrhizal fungi, interacting with root systems of plants of an entire ecosystem unique to that area and unspoiled by human intervention. These areas are not replaceable, repairable or duplicative. The Wildlands' are large enough to be considered an ecosystem and, as wild lands, support and provide the essential requirements for all forms of life.

Mountain Maryland, in particular Garrett County, is the most heavily forested county in the state. That being said, the amount of wild lands in Garrett County are sufficiently small thus rendering them all the more vital and valuable. To risk any harm to the flora and fauna of this region solely for the purpose of transmitting electricity that will largely be used out of state for development serves Marylanders' benefit in no possible way.

This bill undermines legislative intent by proposing an exemption to build a controversial high-powered electric transmission line through three protected areas (COMAR 08.01.02.02) in the Big Savage Mountain Wildland, Bear Pen Wildland, and Dan's Mountain Wildland, an area of 8,443 acres located in Garrett and Allegany Counties.

I am particularly concerned about SB0399 because it offers no specification of the width or number of transmission lines that could be allowed adjacent to Potomac Edison's current ROW.

I urge an Unfavorable Report for SB0399

Thank you, Kenny Braitman