

# **Testimony in Support of SB 483.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brenda Myers

Position: FAV

## **Testimony in Support of SB 483**

**Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,**

My name is Brenda Myers, and I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen, speaking in strong support of SB 483. As a community fighting to protect our farmland, historical landscapes, and rural way of life, this bill ensures that unnecessary and harmful transmission projects—like the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP)—never break ground.

### **Why SB 483 Matters**

#### **Preventing Unnecessary Land Seizure**

Under the current regulatory framework, utilities can push for massive transmission projects even when viable alternatives exist. SB 483 forces the Public Service Commission (PSC) to fully evaluate whether transmission expansion is even necessary before approving a new project. This means utilities can no longer justify land seizures when existing infrastructure can be upgraded instead.

#### **Protecting Agricultural and Historical Land**

The MPRP and similar projects put farmland, historic sites, and conservation areas at risk. SB 483 recognizes these vital spaces and explicitly requires the PSC to avoid siting new transmission lines in these areas. This is a crucial step toward ensuring that Maryland's rural landscapes and preserved farmland remain protected for generations to come.

#### **Encouraging Smarter Energy Infrastructure**

Rather than defaulting to the outdated approach of building more overhead transmission lines, SB 483 promotes modern, efficient solutions such as undergrounding and reconductoring.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.

#### **Strengthening Local Authority**

By requiring the PSC to consider local zoning and planned growth areas, SB 483 empowers communities to have a greater say in energy infrastructure decisions. Instead of transmission developers dictating the terms, local governments and residents gain leverage to push for better alternatives.

### **The Dangers of the MPRP and Similar Projects**

The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), proposed by PJM Interconnection and Potomac Edison, threatens to seize private land, devalue property, and disrupt communities across the state. SB 483 offers a path to stopping this project by ensuring that alternatives are not just an afterthought but a requirement.

If we allow the MPRP to move forward, it will set a dangerous precedent for more unnecessary transmission lines across the state. But if we support and push for the passage of SB 483, we can help shift the regulatory landscape toward a future where smarter, community-first energy planning prevails.

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

SB 483 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.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass SB 483 and ensure that Maryland adopts a more responsible and community-conscious approach to energy transmission.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brenda Myers

Hampstead, Maryland

## **SB483 Price.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brysn Price

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 483  
Presented by Bryan Price  
Maryland State Senate Hearing on SB 483

Chair, Vice Chair, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 483 (SB 483). My name is Bryan Price, and I am a Maryland resident who has been deeply involved in efforts to ensure responsible energy infrastructure planning, particularly in response to the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP).

For far too long, transmission developers have been able to push forward massive, disruptive infrastructure projects with little to no regard for affected communities. SB 483 provides a long-overdue course correction by requiring the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) to fully evaluate alternatives before approving new transmission lines; a change that is both necessary and urgent.

The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) is a prime example of why this legislation is needed. The project threatens to seize private land, devalue properties, and permanently alter communities across Maryland. Under the current regulatory framework, utilities can justify transmission expansion without seriously considering whether alternatives; such as upgrading existing infrastructure, using existing rights-of-way, or undergrounding lines; are viable. SB 483 changes that by ensuring that the PSC must examine these options first before any new transmission project is approved.

Currently, utilities are not required to explore existing infrastructure before pursuing new transmission corridors. SB 483 mandates that the PSC assess whether existing transmission lines; whether owned by the same company or another utility; could meet the energy demand before any new lines are considered. This requirement ensures that redundant and costly infrastructure projects are avoided, and that upgrades to the current grid are prioritized whenever possible.

SB 483 also compels the PSC to ensure that new transmission projects promote economic and efficient service, rather than burdening ratepayers with unnecessary costs. Too often, utilities pursue expansion not out of necessity, but because new infrastructure guarantees a return on investment. By requiring economic justification and thorough cost-benefit analysis, SB 483 protects Maryland residents from rate hikes caused by speculative and unnecessary transmission development.

Beyond economic considerations, this bill is essential to protecting historical, environmental, and agricultural areas. The MPRP and similar projects pose serious threats to farmland, conservation lands, and historically significant sites. SB 483 explicitly directs the PSC to prioritize preservation of these spaces, ensuring that transmission developers do not target rural and environmentally sensitive areas when alternative solutions exist.

Another crucial aspect of SB 483 is its requirement to consider planned growth areas and residential communities before approving new projects. The placement of high-voltage transmission lines through developing areas has significant negative consequences, reducing property values, disrupting local planning efforts, and deterring investment in these communities. This bill strengthens local authority by ensuring that zoning plans and regional development goals are factored into energy infrastructure decisions. Lower property values don't just impact individual homeowners; they have direct consequences on local school funding. Maryland's foundation funding model of education funding is based on property taxes. Already Baltimore and Carroll Counties are making significant cuts to their school systems. When property values decline due to intrusive infrastructure projects, school budgets, and consequently our students suffer. In a time of already uncertain educational funding, unnecessary transmission expansion threatens to undermine the stability and resources of our schools, impacting students, teachers, and the broader community.

A particularly important provision of SB 483 is its directive to evaluate reconductoring (upgrading) existing transmission lines instead of constructing new ones. Modernizing current transmission infrastructure with advanced conductors and technology can significantly increase capacity without requiring additional land use. By requiring the PSC to assess this option, SB 483 encourages smarter, less intrusive energy solutions.

Finally, SB 483 promotes undergrounding transmission lines as an alternative to overhead expansion. While undergrounding is often dismissed as too expensive, it offers long-term reliability benefits by reducing exposure to extreme weather and minimizing environmental and visual impacts. PSEG's repeated failures to quickly restore power after major weather events highlight the vulnerabilities of overhead transmission lines. Burying lines would significantly reduce the frequency and duration of outages, increasing grid resilience and protecting communities from prolonged blackouts. This legislation ensures that undergrounding is properly considered when planning new infrastructure.

The need for this reform is underscored by the failures of PSEG to explore viable

alternatives. When Delegate Nino Mangione questioned PSEG about whether they had examined the potential of utilizing existing infrastructure instead of constructing new transmission lines, PSEG admitted they had not even considered it. It was only after community pushback and political pressure that the company hastily produced a study to justify its original plan. This is unacceptable. Utilities must be held accountable for demonstrating the necessity of new projects rather than defaulting to large-scale, disruptive expansions that benefit their bottom line at the expense of Maryland residents.

But SB 483 gives us a way forward. By passing this bill, the Maryland General Assembly can shift the regulatory landscape to favor smart, community-first energy planning rather than rubber-stamping corporate-driven transmission projects.

The passage of SB 483 is a crucial step toward ensuring that Maryland prioritizes efficiency, sustainability, and community well-being in its energy policies. This bill does not oppose transmission expansion outright, but rather ensures that better solutions are pursued before new lines are approved.

I urge you to support SB 483 to protect Maryland's land, homeowners, and communities from unnecessary, harmful transmission projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Bryan Price  
21221 York Road  
Parkton, MD 21120  
Bryan.s.price@gmail.com  
410.302.8074

## **SB 483.pdf**

Uploaded by: CHERYL EBAUGH

Position: FAV



**Please pass SB 0483 to protect Maryland landowners and ensure that our elected officials and leaders of our beautiful state of Maryland are doing their due diligence to promote responsible transmission development and ensure fair energy policies.**

**Thank you,**

**Cheryl Ebaugh**

# **SB0483-EEE\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FAV



## Senate Bill 483

### *Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: March 6, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 483. This bill calls for additional considerations and requirements for transmission lines and requires the consideration of alternative routes.

The 2025 Maryland General Assembly is facing a historic number of complex generational challenges. One of the loudest issues to arise has been Maryland opposition to the Piedmont Reliability Project. The Project, which crosses Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick Counties, effectively creates an “extension cord” across some of our state’s prime agricultural lands, providing Pennsylvania-generated energy to Virginia-based data centers, with little direct benefit to Marylanders. As the General Assembly debates how to address this and other energy challenges, one of the biggest underlying issues will be how to prioritize now competing state priorities (i.e., energy demands and environmental goals).

Since the 1960s, counties and the State have invested hundreds of millions of dollars into conservation, and to date, counties have actively limited development in these preserved areas. The intent of SB 483 is to respond to the Piedmont Project by requiring both the Public Service Commission and the applicant to more thoroughly justify a project’s proposed route and to consider alternatives. As transmission infrastructure upgrades may uniquely be accomplished by upgrading existing lines or using existing land, counties join the sponsor in wanting to protect the finite number of conserved lands.

This is commonsense legislation which seeks to address conflicts between Maryland’s growing demand for energy and billions invested into other pro-climate policies to date. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 483 a **FAVORABLE** report.

## **SB483 - McFarland Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Elizabeth (Betsy) McFarland

Position: FAV

Elizabeth (“Betsy”) and Michael McFarland  
2501 Monocacy Bottom Road  
Adamstown, MD 21710  
240-447-8616  
betsymcfarland@gmail.com  
mike@moxiecreations.com

March 4, 2025

**Testimony in support of SB483 - Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
From: Elizabeth (“Betsy”) and Michael McFarland

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

We are residents of Adamstown, Maryland, writing to express our strong support for SB483 - Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines. This bill is critical in ensuring that the Public Service Commission thoroughly evaluates alternatives before approving new transmission projects.

As longtime Maryland residents and homeowners in Frederick County, our property lies directly in the proposed path of the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), currently under review by the Maryland Public Service Commission. This project is deeply concerning for many reasons—including potential loss of home value, destruction of forests and wetlands on our property, and serious safety concerns about living next to high-voltage power lines.

Even more troubling, the MPRP relies on outdated technology and may be obsolete before it’s even operational. PJM and PSEG failed to conduct a thorough analysis of modern alternatives and instead proposed the option that was fastest, cheapest, and most profitable for their corporate interests—at the direct expense of Maryland landowners and ratepayers.

If private property is to be taken through eminent domain, the state must first ensure that the project is truly necessary and that no better alternatives exist. SB483 is essential to protecting Maryland’s landscapes, private property rights, and conservation efforts from unnecessary and irreversible destruction.

**We urge you to support SB483 and stand with Maryland homeowners, farmers, and communities who deserve responsible energy planning.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Betsy and Michael McFarland

## **SB 483 - Alternatives to Construction of New Trans**

Uploaded by: Grayson Middleton

Position: FAV



*Educate. Advocate. Innovate.*

Date: March 4, 2025  
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment  
From: Grayson Middleton, Government Affairs Manager  
Re: SB0483 - Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines – **Support**

Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, companies, and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware supports SB 483 and urges a favorable committee report.

SB 483 would require the Public Service Commission to examine alternatives to the construction of a new transmission line if the use of an alternative will best maintain historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas.

Over the last 50 years, the State of Maryland has spent considerable resources and attention on preserving agricultural lands. These programs were initiated to protect food supplies, preserve rural landscapes, and maintain a healthy ecosystem, among other reasons. These efforts have been enormously successful, and today the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) estimates that over 300,000 acres of agricultural land have been permanently preserved through their program.

However, agriculture faces constant development pressure. Recently, discussions on the siting of critically needed transmission lines have largely focused on agricultural areas. To ensure that the rich tradition of ag land preservation in Maryland endures and our commitments are upheld, we must make serious efforts to avoid preservation areas in development.

Preserving Maryland's agricultural and environmental resources requires policies that honor conservation commitments while supporting thoughtful growth. SB 483 ensures that infrastructure expansion does not come at the expense of protected lands, reinforcing trust in preservation programs and aligning with the state's long-term sustainability goals. As such, we urge a favorable vote on SB 483.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at [middleton@dcachicken.com](mailto:middleton@dcachicken.com) or 410-490-3329.

Sincerely,

Grayson Middleton

Government Affairs Manager

# **Testimony to General Assembly James Belt 03042025.**

Uploaded by: James Belt

Position: FAV



March 4, 2025

James H. Belt, III

2626 Stone Road

Westminster, MD 21158

Maryland General Assembly

**RE: Support of bills advocating for a better approach to energy development**

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly:

My name is James Belt. As a resident of Carroll County and a proud Maryland business owner, I am writing to ask you to vote favorably for bills advocating a better approach to energy development.

As someone who had the potential to be impacted by the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project, I was disturbed and disappointed by the existing process for project consideration and protections for landowners. It became apparent that the current process did not require enough investigation into potential alternatives to the proposed transmission lines. Additionally, the public appeared to be brought into the process at later stages, making it harder for citizens impacted by the project to voice their concerns. It appears that there may be many viable alternatives to the proposed project. I also believe there has not been enough consideration to the impact of closing existing power plants before the State of Maryland has a viable alternative to generate the power being lost.

With that in mind, I would strongly encourage you to vote for the proposed bills that improve the process, provide more protection for Maryland citizens, and advocate for investigation into potentially better and more economic alternatives to new transmission lines.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best,

James Belt

(410)-236-3574

## **Jessica Malatt.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jessica Malatt

Position: FAV

Jessica Malatt

7709 Hobbs Court

Mount Airy, MD 21771

jessicamalatt@gmail.com

240-529-2348

3/4/2025

Testimony in Support of Senate Bills 483, 853, 947, 950, 951, 952, 953, 955 and House Bills 631, 1079, 1337, 1362, 1396

To:

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Chair: Senator Brian J. Feldman – brian.feldman@senate.state.md.us

Vice Chair: Senator Cheryl C. Kagan – cheryl.kagan@senate.state.md.us

House Economic Matters Committee

Chair: Delegate C.T. Wilson – ct.wilson@house.state.md.us

Vice Chair: Delegate Brian M. Crosby – brian.crosby@house.state.md.us

From: Jessica Malatt

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee & the House Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Jessica Malatt, and I am a resident of Mount Airy, Maryland. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bills 483, 853, 947, 950, 951, 952, 953, 955 and House Bills 631, 1079, 1337, 1362, 1396, which are essential in protecting homeowners, families, and our environment from unnecessary and harmful infrastructure projects like the Maryland Public Service Commission's (PSC) MPRP transmission line proposal.

As a homeowner in a rural community directly impacted by this project, my greatest concern is the well-being of my family. My husband and I chose to build our home in this peaceful, natural environment to raise our children away from urban congestion, noise, and industrial encroachment. The proposed transmission lines would disrupt this way of life, forcing us to live beneath towering electrical structures and exposing our children to potential health risks from

electromagnetic fields. This is not what we envisioned when we made a lifelong investment in this property.

Beyond the direct impact on my home, the MPRP transmission project threatens the surrounding forested land, including a neighboring property that shares the same woodland area. This forest serves as a natural buffer, providing privacy, clean air, and an essential habitat for wildlife. If this project proceeds unchecked, it will irreversibly damage the environment, destroy mature trees, and alter the rural character of our community.

The bills I support ensure that homeowners like myself are not forced to accept industrial-scale projects in our backyards without thorough evaluation of alternative solutions.

- Senate Bill 483 requires the Public Service Commission to consider less invasive options before approving new transmission lines, protecting sensitive environmental and residential areas.
- House Bill 631 reinforces property rights by preventing the state from taking land under perpetual agricultural or conservation easements.
- Senate Bill 953 proposes the creation of a task force to develop a realistic electricity plan for Maryland, ensuring that future infrastructure meets energy demands responsibly without sacrificing homeowner rights.

These measures provide necessary oversight and accountability to prevent projects like MPRP from overriding the interests of Maryland's homeowners and environment.

While some may argue that expanding the power grid is necessary for future energy demands, we must balance progress with responsible development. Placing transmission lines in residential and environmentally sensitive areas is not the only option—alternative solutions such as underground lines or existing right-of-ways should be prioritized.

These bills advocate for that balance, ensuring that Maryland's infrastructure needs do not come at the cost of:

- Families' health
- Property values
- Environmental conservation

### Call to Action

I respectfully urge you to support Senate Bills 483, 853, 947, 950, 951, 952, 953, 955 and House Bills 631, 1079, 1337, 1362, 1396, and to advocate for their passage to protect Maryland's homeowners, preserve our forests, and prevent unnecessary and harmful infrastructure development.

### Closing and Thank You

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at [jessicamalatt@gmail.com](mailto:jessicamalatt@gmail.com) or 240-529-2348. I appreciate your dedication to serving our community and look forward to seeing your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Jessica Malatt

# **FAV\_SB0853\_StopMPRPInc.pdf**

Uploaded by: Joanne Frederick

Position: FAV



## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**BILL NO.:** Senate Bill 853 – Public Service Commission - Transmission Line Siting - Limitations

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**HEARING DATE:** March 6, 2025

**SPONSORS:** Senators Lewis Young, Brooks, and Hettleman

**POSITION:** Favorable with Amendments

I submit this testimony on behalf of Stop MPRP, Inc. in strong support of Senate Bill 853 (SB0853), with the adoption of two critical amendments. This bill is essential to protect Maryland's land, communities, and energy future by ensuring greater oversight, transparency, and strategic planning in transmission development while limiting unnecessary and disruptive overhead transmission line construction.

### **PJM's Award of the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) and the Importance of SB0853**

PJM Interconnection awarded the **Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP)** before the implementation of **FERC Order 1920**, limiting Maryland's ability to participate in the planning and oversight of this massive infrastructure project. Had **FERC Order 1920** been in place, Maryland would have had **more insight, influence, and control over the project's necessity, siting, and alternative considerations**.

- **FERC Order 1920** enhances **state involvement in long-term transmission planning**, ensuring that states like Maryland can assess the full impact of projects like MPRP **before they are approved**.
- **PJM's approval of MPRP under outdated regulatory frameworks** denied Maryland the ability to require alternative solutions such as grid-enhancing technologies, reconductoring, and undergrounding transmission lines.
- **Without proactive legislation like SB0853**, Maryland remains vulnerable to transmission projects that prioritize corporate expansion over the state's environmental, economic, and land use priorities.



## Key Protections Under SB0853

### 1. Restricts Unnecessary Overhead Transmission Lines

- The bill **prohibits the construction of new overhead transmission lines unless utilities prove that existing rights-of-way are insufficient.**
- If new corridors are needed, they **must be sited within 0.25 miles of an existing transmission line**, reducing environmental and property impacts.

### 2. Reinforces Local and State Authority

- SB0853 **preserves local authority over permitting**, ensuring communities retain control over projects affecting their land and environment.
- It **prevents local governments from being forced to accept transmission line approvals** without due consideration.

### 3. Increases Transparency and Accountability (*Strengthened by the Amendments*)

- **Amendment 1:** Adds **electricity demand reporting requirements**, mandating utilities to submit annual reports to the Public Service Commission (PSC) on:
  - Forecasted electricity demand and expected geographic areas of increased load.
  - Available resources to meet demand, including demand response and distributed energy.
  - Anticipated impacts of federal and state regulations.
  - A list of projects requiring PJM Interconnection approval.
- **Amendment 2:** Requires the **PSC to compile and include this data in its annual reports to the General Assembly** to ensure **greater transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making** in Maryland's energy planning.

### 4. Aligns Maryland's Transmission Planning with FERC Order 1920

- FERC Order 1920 ensures that **states play a central role in regional transmission planning**, but Maryland must **pass SB0853 to protect against projects like MPRP that were rushed through under outdated policies.**
- This bill ensures **future transmission development aligns with Maryland's priorities** rather than defaulting to out-of-state decision-making by PJM and transmission developers.



## **The Urgency to Act: Stopping the MPRP**

The **MPRP threatens private property, devalues properties, and degrades Maryland's rural and agricultural landscapes**. According to project studies, MPRP's proposed **right-of-way (ROW) would impact:**

- 245.8 acres of conservation easements, including 224.6 acres protected under MALPF.
- 51.1 acres of wetlands, including 10.1 acres of forested wetlands.
- 394.2 acres of forested lands.
- 101 stream and waterbody crossings.
- 1,801.7 acres of conserved land within 500 feet of the ROW.

The **destruction of conservation lands, forests, and wetlands for an unnecessary transmission project is unacceptable**. The **PSC must be required to prioritize state interests over PJM's rushed planning decisions**.

**Passing SB0853, with the amendments, is crucial to:**

- Protect Maryland's authority over transmission siting.
- Ensure responsible energy planning that prioritizes existing infrastructure and alternatives.
- Stop projects like the MPRP from advancing without full state oversight.
- Encourage distributed energy solutions that reduce the need for new transmission lines.

## **Conclusion**

By **limiting unnecessary transmission expansion, reinforcing local and state oversight, and aligning Maryland's regulatory framework with FERC Order 1920, SB0853 empowers Marylanders to control their energy future**.

I urge the committee to issue a **favorable report with the two amendments**. Thank you for your time and consideration.



**Respectfully submitted,**

Joanne Frederick

President

Stop MPRP, Inc.

[joanne.frederick@stopmprp.org](mailto:joanne.frederick@stopmprp.org)

443.789.1382

# **MPRP BILLS SUPPORT.pdf**

Uploaded by: Julie Holly

Position: FAV

I am writing in support of the following bills: SB483, SB853, SB947, SB950, SB951, SB952, SB953, SB955, HB631, HB1079, HB1337, HB1362, and HB1396.

Each of these bills is essential to ensuring that any entity seeking to construct energy transmission or generating facilities is held accountable for the full impact of its actions. For too long, citizens have shouldered the financial and personal costs of these projects—whether through harm to their health, businesses, properties, incomes, or overall quality of life. Meanwhile, corporations reap the benefits without sufficient regard for the communities they affect.

The approval of the MPRP project as currently proposed would send a troubling message to Maryland residents about where their interests rank in the eyes of their representatives. Maryland thrives when its communities thrive, and maintaining a strong, engaged population depends on policies that protect the well-being and economic stability of those who call this state home. Enacting stricter regulations to ensure corporate responsibility would reinforce that Maryland legislators are committed to safeguarding their constituents and the long-term prosperity of the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Julie Holly, District 4

# **MOS SB0483 Utility Line Alternatives Mar 2025.pd**

Uploaded by: Kurt Schwarz

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

February 18, 2025

Bill: <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/bills/sb/sb0483F.pdf>

**Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Testimony on SB0483 –Public Utilities –Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) strongly supports SB0483. This bill would require the Public Service Commission to consider alternatives to construction of new transmission lines that would impact historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas, or in planned growth areas.

Overhead transmission lines fragment wildlife habitat, and are detrimental to those that depend on deep, forest interiors, such as Kentucky Warblers and Ovenbirds. North America has lost almost 30% of its birds since 1970.<sup>1</sup> Habitat destruction is a major source to that decline. HB0657 will preserve habitat and help preserve our bird and wildlife population.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report for SB0483 to protect historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas, and planned growth areas.

Kurt R. Schwarz  
Conservation Chair Emeritus  
Maryland Ornithological Society  
[www.mdbirds.org](http://www.mdbirds.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Rosenberg, Kenneth V. et al, Decline of the North American avifauna, Science, VOL 366, NO. 6451, 19 September 2019,  
[https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aaw1313?adobe\\_mc=MCORGID%3D242B6472541199F70A4C98A6%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1707754028](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aaw1313?adobe_mc=MCORGID%3D242B6472541199F70A4C98A6%2540AdobeOrg%7CTS%3D1707754028)

## **20250306 SB 0483 Public Utilities Alternatives to**

Uploaded by: Larry Porter

Position: FAV



**Senate Bill 483**

*Public Utilities—Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines*

Position: **FAV**

Date: **March 6, 2025**

To: **Economic Matters**

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we wish to express our **strong support** for **Senate Bill 483—Public Utilities—Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**, which provides a common-sense approach to evaluating new transmission line projects by requiring the Public Service Commission (PSC) to thoroughly consider alternatives before approving new construction. This bill is essential for protecting rural communities, preserving farmland, and ensuring that energy infrastructure aligns with local planning priorities.

Caroline County is a predominantly rural area where new transmission lines can have significant impacts on agricultural land, historic sites, and planned residential development. Under current law, these projects can move forward without fully considering existing rights-of-way, upgrades to current infrastructure, or undergrounding—all of which could reduce disruption to our communities. SB 483 ensures that these alternatives are carefully evaluated so that necessary infrastructure improvements are made in the least disruptive and most cost-effective way possible.

Furthermore, this bill ensures that transmission projects do not conflict with county comprehensive plans or encroach on designated growth areas. By prioritizing existing infrastructure and requiring consideration of undergrounding where feasible, SB 483 supports both economic development and land preservation efforts in Caroline County.

We appreciate your leadership in ensuring that local governments and residents have a voice in utility planning decisions. We urge your support for SB 483 and look forward to working together to ensure responsible infrastructure development in Maryland.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President



## **SB483.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa Orens

Position: FAV

I support SB483 for the following reasons:

The Public Service Commission must be required to evaluate alternatives to new transmission lines, including undergrounding and reconductoring existing lines. This must be done by incorporating information from environmental, agricultural and Power generation specialists. The consequences of rushing into erecting new transmission lines are tremendous and devastating for landowners, farmers and business owners.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Orens,

Owner, Bluebird Hall Farm

# **Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives-1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matthew Moran

Position: FAV

March 4, 2025

Dear Honorable Senators and Delegates,

Alternatives to new electrical transmission lines must be considered before any new green field route is approved.

Please support SB 483

Thank you very much,

Matt Moran

2931 Monocacy Bottom Rd.  
Adamstown, MD 21710  
[monocacybottommatt@gmail.com](mailto:monocacybottommatt@gmail.com)

# **SB483 - McFarland Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mike McFarland

Position: FAV

Elizabeth (“Betsy”) and Michael McFarland  
2501 Monocacy Bottom Road  
Adamstown, MD 21710  
240-447-8616  
betsymcfarland@gmail.com  
mike@moxiecreations.com

March 4, 2025

**Testimony in support of SB483 - Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
From: Elizabeth (“Betsy”) and Michael McFarland

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

We are residents of Adamstown, Maryland, writing to express our strong support for SB483 - Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines. This bill is critical in ensuring that the Public Service Commission thoroughly evaluates alternatives before approving new transmission projects.

As longtime Maryland residents and homeowners in Frederick County, our property lies directly in the proposed path of the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), currently under review by the Maryland Public Service Commission. This project is deeply concerning for many reasons—including potential loss of home value, destruction of forests and wetlands on our property, and serious safety concerns about living next to high-voltage power lines.

Even more troubling, the MPRP relies on outdated technology and may be obsolete before it’s even operational. PJM and PSEG failed to conduct a thorough analysis of modern alternatives and instead proposed the option that was fastest, cheapest, and most profitable for their corporate interests—at the direct expense of Maryland landowners and ratepayers.

If private property is to be taken through eminent domain, the state must first ensure that the project is truly necessary and that no better alternatives exist. SB483 is essential to protecting Maryland’s landscapes, private property rights, and conservation efforts from unnecessary and irreversible destruction.

**We urge you to support SB483 and stand with Maryland homeowners, farmers, and communities who deserve responsible energy planning.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Betsy and Michael McFarland

# **SB0483 testimony by Valleys Planning Council.pdf**

Uploaded by: Renee Hamidi

Position: FAV



[thevpc.org](http://thevpc.org) | [info@thevpc.org](mailto:info@thevpc.org) | 410.337.6877  
118 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, Towson, Maryland 21204  
P.O. Box 5402 Towson, Maryland 21285-5402

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Testimony on: SB0483 “Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: March 6, 2025

Valleys Planning Council, a non-profit that conserves land and resources, preserves historic character and maintains the rural feel and land uses in northwestern Baltimore County, urges a favorable report on SB0483 which would expand the circumstances under which the Public Service Commission is required to examine alternatives to the construction of a new transmission line.

Energy transmission line building projects do not now require companies that build the projects to investigate alternatives to new lines. Companies are not required to consider any of a county’s provisions in its comprehensive plan to protect historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas. SB0483 would require the PSC to examine alternatives that would maintain a County’s preservation areas and promote efficient service to the public. This bill could reduce costs to ratepayers and reduce the impact of increasing electrical energy needs on Maryland and its residents.

Valleys Planning Council urges a favorable report on SB0483.

Renée Hamidi  
Executive Director  
Valleys Planning Council

**Protect. Preserve. Enjoy.**



## **Testimony in support of SB0483 - Public Utilities**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0483\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
03/06/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0483 – FAVORABLE**  
**Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0483, Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

This bill is an environmental protection measure that seeks to preserve existing historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas from encroachment by new transmission lines. This bill will accomplish that goal by requiring the Public Service Commission to consider the impact of the development of overhead transmission lines on certain properties subject to an existing conservation easement in certain proceedings for a certificate of public convenience and necessity. It establishes that companies wishing to construct transmission lines must do due diligence to document whether alternatives exist that do not impact those areas. It will add protection of any overlap by the construction with certain lots, parcels, or tracts of land such as access roads that will cross the affected areas to provide entry to the site of the transmission lines.

Because of this bill the PSC will have added requirements for evaluation of construction of transmission line projects that takes into account added factors that can and will affect the quality of life and economies of affected jurisdictions and their residents. It will provide tools that can be used in evaluation of proposals by both local and regional transmission organizations for electrical infrastructure construction. It adds to the knowledge base on which an intelligent decision on permitting can occur. It also forces consideration of the ancillary impacts of these construction projects.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0483.**

# **SB483.pdf**

Uploaded by: Suzannah Moran

Position: FAV

Dear Senators,

I am writing to ask you to support SB483. There are many technological advancements that may make the construction of new transmission lines along greenfield routes unnecessary. Given the social, environmental, and ecological destruction that comes with a greenfield transmission route, and the outrage caused by eminent domain, I ask that you please direct the Public Service Commission to explore all alternatives to constructing new greenfield routes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Suzannah Moran

# **MDFB - Support – SB483 Public Utilities - Alternat**

Uploaded by: Tyler Hough

Position: FAV



## Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035  
410-922-3426 | [www.mdfarmbureau.com](http://www.mdfarmbureau.com)

March 6, 2025

**To:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**From:** Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

**RE: Support – SB483 – Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

On behalf of the nearly 8,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau and our agricultural community, I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 483, which expands the Public Service Commission's examination of alternatives to the construction of new transmission lines. This bill is of particular importance to Maryland's farming families, as it prioritizes the preservation of historical, environmental, and agricultural lands when considering energy infrastructure projects.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Maryland's economy, culture, and way of life. Farmland is a finite and irreplaceable resource, and encroachments by new transmission lines pose significant threats to both productivity and long-term sustainability. By requiring the consideration of alternatives—such as the use of existing transmission lines, existing rights-of-way, reconductoring, and undergrounding—this legislation ensures that Maryland's agricultural lands are protected from unnecessary disruption.

The provisions outlined in SB 483 align with our mission to safeguard Maryland's rural landscapes while supporting responsible infrastructure development. Preserving farmland is not only critical for food production but also for environmental stewardship, open space conservation, and the economic viability of family-owned farms. We believe that prioritizing alternative solutions to transmission line construction is a balanced approach that benefits both our agricultural communities and the broader public.

We commend the bill sponsors for their leadership on this issue and urge the General Assembly to pass SB 483. The Maryland Farm Bureau appreciates your consideration of this important legislation, and we stand ready to work alongside policymakers to ensure its successful implementation.

Tyler Hough  
Director of Government Relations

Please reach out to Tyler Hough, [though@marylandfb.org](mailto:though@marylandfb.org), with any questions

## **SB483.pdf**

Uploaded by: Whitney Miller

Position: FAV

Hello,

As a lifelong Marylander, I am proud of this state and the life it has provided for myself and my family. We have been able to appreciate the agricultural benefits and commitment to the environment. With the changes in energy demands and concern for the long term effects of catering to such demands, we cannot afford to be short sighted in solutions. We, as a state, must demand the absolute best when it comes to meeting these demands. We must consider environmental impacts, and demand the most sustainable, efficient, and least detrimental methods. Defaulting to new transmission lines will leave a scar on our state that cannot be repaired, even though they will not be the most successful method long term. Please support SB 483 to ensure our state is not decimated by unnecessary transmission lines when better alternatives are available.

Thank you,

Whitney Miller  
Maryland Resident



# **SB483 Testimony LZ 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lynne Zink

Position: FWA

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

Position: Favorable with Amendment: **Strike line 13 on page 2. We do NOT want the use of an existing right-of-way.**

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 a family farm in Kingsville. 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 Lynn Zink on behalf of the entire Zink family which consists of 37 family members.

# **SB483 Testimony Zink 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lynne Zink

Position: FWA

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

Position: Favorable with Amendment: to remove existing right of way  
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.

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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 Lynn Zink on behalf of the entire Zink family which consists of 37 family members.

# **Case for Support SB483.pdf**

Uploaded by: Patricia VonParis

Position: FWA

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.**



# **SB483 Testimony RHU 2025 Amendment.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel Ullmann

Position: FWA



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,

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!

**Suggested Amendment: Strike line 13 on page 2. We do NOT want the use of an existing right-of-way.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Ullmann, District 7A, Kingsville

# **SB483 Testimony RHU 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel Ullmann

Position: FWA

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.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Ullmann, District 7A, Kingsville

# **SB0483\_FWA\_ScenicAmerica.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tziporah Feldman

Position: FWA



March 4, 2025

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

To the Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of Scenic America, the nation's only 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting our country's scenic beauty, I am writing to express our strong support for Maryland Senate Bill 0483. The state's commitment to improving grid reliability and resiliency can be strengthened by utilizing underground transmission lines along existing rights-of-way (ROWs). Not only does undergrounding improve grid resilience—which is especially important in an era of weather events intensified by climate change—but also utilizes existing infrastructure to preserve and protect our most treasured landscapes. This bill represents an important step in modernizing Maryland's electrical grid by ensuring that overhead transmission lines are not the default option for meeting the state's growing electrical demand, while also actively preserving the integrity and beauty of our surroundings.

Scenic America advocates for policies that preserve scenic beauty and prevent visual blight, not only for economic growth but also to uphold the right of all individuals to live, work, and play in a visually appealing environment. Scenic America therefore endorses undergrounding for its ability to increase resiliency in the face of extreme weather and reliably deliver power equally across communities while preserving landscapes and community character. Scenic America applauds Senator Gallion's introduction of Senate Bill 0483 to modernize Maryland's electrical infrastructure by encouraging the Public Service Commission to consider alternatives to new overhead transmission lines.

The need for statewide standards for undergrounding and co-location is especially evident in projects like the Piedmont Reliability Project. This proposed transmission line has raised serious concerns from residents and local governments in Frederick, Carroll, and Baltimore Counties due to its potential impact on farmland, conservation easements, and protected forest buffers. Without a clear, statewide approach to prioritizing undergrounding and co-location, projects like this are more likely to result in significant disruption to communities and scenic landscapes. Statewide transmission undergrounding provides a practical solution to address community concerns, protect sensitive areas, and respect property rights while addressing the electrical needs of the state. By strengthening the PSC's criteria, SB 0483 ensures that alternatives are carefully considered before any new transmission line is approved.

Despite the common belief that transmission lines are too expensive to underground, undergrounding transmission lines can prove to be a cost-effective method for electrical infrastructure. Although upfront costs may be higher than those of overhead line construction, underground lines require less maintenance and are more resilient through weather events, reducing long-term costs. Underground transmission lines likewise offer long-term savings through reduced vegetation management, lower operations and maintenance expenses, and increased resilience to climate disasters and wildfires.

From a construction standpoint, undergrounding within rights-of-way (ROWs) provides a key economic advantage by speeding up permitting, therefore reducing project timelines and costs. Additionally, because these areas are already considered environmentally disturbed areas, undergrounding in the ROW makes these projects exempt from arduous environmental assessments—reducing time, resources, and costs. Lastly, undergrounding in the ROW does not require the implementation of eminent domain, leading to less public opposition—an issue that has defined the current state of the Piedmont Reliability Project. Together, utilizing the ROW approach quickens permitting while minimizing legal battles and community backlash.

While Scenic America supports the investigation of alternatives to overhead transmission lines, we urge a stronger emphasis on scenic conservation when evaluating any overhead transmission line. We suggest that the section “Will best maintain historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas;” be amended to say, “Will best maintain historical, environmental, scenic, or agricultural preservation areas.” By expanding Senate Bill 0483 to address concerns of aesthetics and undergrounding, Maryland can effectively demonstrate that infrastructure expansion and visual conservation can go hand in hand.

Additionally, to better protect Maryland’s scenic, historical, and environmentally sensitive areas, we recommend that the bill’s language be strengthened to explicitly prioritize undergrounding as the preferred method for new transmission projects. Specifically, undergrounding should be the default approach along existing rights-of-way and in areas where visual impact, environmental preservation, and community concerns are key considerations. Likewise, the bill should include specific language that instructs the PSC to consider the implicit costs of overhead wires (e.g., vegetation management, overhead maintenance, natural disasters, and time required for permit) when considering overhead versus undergrounding.

While Scenic America generally opposes any overhead transmission line, we are aware that undergrounding all lines is impractical. We therefore encourage the prioritization of lines that go through sensitive areas, including public lands, historic sites, communities, and scenic areas. In cases in which undergrounding is not feasible, other methods should be considered to minimize visual impacts such as reconductoring, co-location with existing transmission lines, or avoiding scenically sensitive areas. By adopting these strategies, Maryland can modernize its infrastructure while preserving its unique and treasured landscapes for generations to come.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting Maryland's scenic beauty and ensuring a reliable and resilient energy infrastructure. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [mark.falzone@scenic.org](mailto:mark.falzone@scenic.org) if I can provide further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Falzone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Falzone" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Falzone  
President, Scenic America

# **SB0483 PHI LOI 3.6.25pdf.pdf**

Uploaded by: Anne Klase

Position: INFO





March 6, 2025

112 West Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Letter of Information – Senate Bill 483 - Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

Potomac Electric Power Company (Pepco) and Delmarva Power & Light Company (Delmarva Power) submit this letter of information for **Senate Bill 483- Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**. Senate Bill 483 requires the Public Service Commission to examine alternatives to the construction of a new transmission line if the use of an alternative will best maintain historical, environmental, or agricultural preservation areas, or will avoid any overlap with certain lots, parcels, or tracts of land.

As part of the current Transmission CPCN process, applications must include purpose and justification (project need), description of the transmission line, alternative transmission line routes, and environmental information. Presumably, this legislation would expand this analysis beyond just alternative routes to include alternative solutions in general. Pepco and Delmarva Power generally evaluate a variety of options to address system concerns throughout the CPCN process. It is important that this legislation does not prioritize certain aspects of an analysis that could potentially lead to the most economic and reliable options being rejected.

Pepco and Delmarva Power look forward to continuing conversations with the bill sponsor and all stakeholders involved.

Pepco Holdings, the parent company of Pepco, an electric utility serving Washington, D.C., and suburban Maryland; Delmarva Power, an electric and gas utility serving Delaware and portions of the Delmarva Peninsula; and Atlantic City Electric, an electric utility serving southern New Jersey. Anthony and his team are responsible for guiding the company's delivery of reliable and excellent service to more than two million customers in the Mid-Atlantic. Pepco Holdings is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation, one of the nation's leading energy services companies.

**Valencia McClure | Anne Klase | Allyson Black-Woodson | Poetri Deal | 410 980 5347**

## **BGE\_EEE\_LOI\_SB483– Public Utilities – Alternatives**

Uploaded by: Dytonia Reed

Position: INFO

Letter of Information  
Education, Energy, and Environment  
3/6/2025

**Senate Bill 483 - - Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines**

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company (BGE) submits this letter to provide information regarding Senate Bill 483 – Public Utilities – Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines. Senate Bill 483 mandates that the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) examine alternatives to constructing new transmission lines, provided these alternatives are convenient for the service area, promote economic and public service, preserve historical, environmental, or agricultural areas, or avoid overlap with a lot, parcel or tract of land that is located in a planned growth area identified in the local jurisdictions comprehensive plan, or zoned for residential use or mixed use with a residential component. The bill states that “alternatives” include reconductoring existing transmission lines, utilizing rights-of-way, using existing transmission lines from other companies, and undergrounding a transmission line.

BGE is concerned that the bill adds unnecessary and overly prescriptive requirements to the CPCN statute, which will result in additional costs to all parties involved the CPCN process, including to the PSC and other State agencies that are actively involved in evaluating CPCN applications, as well as applicants. BGE is also concerned that this bill will add more time to an already lengthy CPCN procedural process, and that this could cause delays in the permitting of transmission projects that are needed to maintain the reliability of the transmission grid and to help facilitate the economic dispatch of power throughout the regional grid.

To construct a new overhead transmission line designed to carry more than 69,000 volts in Maryland, the PSC must issue a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) for the proposed project. The current CPCN process is rigorous, comprehensive in terms of the impacts it considers, and inclusive in terms of opportunities for public input and party review and scrutiny of proposed projects. Among other considerations, the PSC is already required to evaluate alternatives to the construction of new overhead transmission lines, including route alternatives to a new proposed transmission line. In considering alternatives to new overhead lines, the Commission already considers a wide range of environmental and socioeconomic impacts, including impacts on historic and agricultural resources. Additionally, the PSC is already required to consider local concerns with regard

BGE, headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland’s largest gas and electric utility, delivering power to more than 1.3 million electric customers and more than 700,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland. The company’s approximately 3,400 employees are committed to the safe and reliable delivery of gas and electricity, as well as enhanced energy management, conservation, environmental stewardship and community assistance. BGE is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation’s largest energy delivery company.

to transmission line siting. Indeed, the PSC is required to hold joint public hearings on CPCN projects with local jurisdictions, unless the local jurisdictions decline, and the PSC is to give “due consideration” to the recommendations of each local jurisdiction where the proposed Transmission project would be located.

Transmission lines are necessary to transport electric energy across long distances. Because Maryland is a net importer of electric supply, the State must have transmission lines to access and transport electric power from other states in order to meet our state’s energy demands. Without this, Maryland would face outages. Lengthening an already long and rigorous CPCN process will delay, or derail needed power supply in Maryland at a time when the state is critically short of power. Delays in transmission projects can impact reliability making it more difficult to meet growing demand during peak times or extreme weather events. Without timely upgrades, energy delivery is more vulnerable to disruptions and emergent events impacting resilience. Slow project completion can lead to grid congestion and inefficiencies in the energy market, impacting energy prices and availability and deter necessary future investments and job growth. This added process will make these transmission projects more costly for customers.

Moreover, the bill amends current law that already requires consideration of alternatives to the construction of new transmission lines, including the potential use of existing rights of way, by adding certain specific considerations and adding a definition of “alternatives.” The Commission has the current authority to consider such issues. Adding specific types of “alternatives” to the statute may result in limiting the Commission’s discretion to consider different types of alternatives to new transmission lines that are not specifically called out by this Bill.

Lastly, Senate Bill 483 would unnecessarily increase the cost of transmission projects and the time that it takes to permit them at the worst possible time, when Maryland needs to bolster its transmission infrastructure to meet growing demand and ensure safe and reliable power delivery to its citizens. Maryland’s transmission grid is already constrained, making electricity imports more expensive. BGE supports cost-effective solutions for resource adequacy that do not compromise safety, reliability, or affordability. The PSC already has the responsibility to address the concerns that this Bill would specifically prescribe by statute. Doing so threatens to diminish the Commission’s discretion in CPCN cases, bog down an already rigorous and lengthy CPCN review process and add unnecessary additional costs to the State agencies that are required to review CPCN applications.

BGE looks forward to continuing discussions with the bill sponsor and all stakeholders involved.

BGE, headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland’s largest gas and electric utility, delivering power to more than 1.3 million electric customers and more than 700,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland. The company’s approximately 3,400 employees are committed to the safe and reliable delivery of gas and electricity, as well as enhanced energy management, conservation, environmental stewardship and community assistance. BGE is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation’s largest energy delivery company.

## **SB0483 (HB0657) - LOC - Public Utilities - Alterna**

Uploaded by: Landon Fahrig

Position: INFO



# Maryland

## Energy Administration

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** MEA

**SUBJECT:** SB 483 - Public Utilities - Alternatives to Construction of New Transmission Lines

**DATE:** March 6, 2025

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### **MEA Position: LETTER OF CONCERN**

This bill would potentially unduly restrict transmission development in the State, which threatens to reduce the reliability and resilience benefits of transmission or increase per-unit costs that can be imposed on residential and commercial ratepayers through retail rates.<sup>1</sup> The legislation broadens the Public Service Commission’s (“the Commission”) examination of alternatives from an existing transmission line to additional types of alternatives, yet restricts the alternatives considered to those that avoid any overlap with several types of real property subject to local jurisdiction: land located within a planned growth area or zoned for residential or mixed-residential use. The result could be elimination from consideration of an alternative with some interaction with such property that would ultimately impact significantly fewer –but not zero– lands than a new transmission line.

Further, the bill defines “alternative” through an exhaustive list that may inadvertently exclude existing and future alternative transmission technologies and limit the Commission’s discretion. For example, the deployment of grid-enhancing technologies (GETs), a collection of advanced sensors, controls, and analytical tools designed to optimize grid performance, is not included in the definition. This approach is more narrow than current law, in which “[t]he Commission shall examine alternatives to the construction of a new transmission line in a service area, including [but not limited to] the use of an existing transmission line of another company.”<sup>2</sup>

Our sincere thanks for your consideration of this testimony. For questions or additional information, please contact Landon Fahrig, Legislative Liaison, directly ([landon.fahrig@maryland.gov](mailto:landon.fahrig@maryland.gov), 410.931.1537).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rstreet.org/commentary/state-permitting-challenges-electric-transmission/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/public-utilities/division-i/title-7/subtitle-2/section-7-209/>