



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 11, 2025

SB 661 – Compensation for Farm and Agricultural Property Act of 2025

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) is threatening to acquire countless farms and agricultural properties across Northern Maryland, and through current eminent domain laws they would only need to pay for the value of the property. These farmers, who represent the largest commercial industry in our state, will be unjustly thrown from their land without recognition of family history, which for many farm owners is passed down generation after generation. This is being done to run a power line over 70 miles of some of Maryland's most sensitive areas, a power line that will serve Northern Virginia data centers and consumers only, essentially a giant extension cord.

Senate Bill 661 would require the fair market value of certain agricultural property taken in a condemnation proceeding to be valued at 350% of the highest appraisal value of the property; and apply the act retroactively to condemnation proceedings initiated on or after January 1, 2024.

Under current law, the party whose property is taken through eminent domain must receive "just compensation" which is no less than market value. The party whose property is being taken is entitled to a judicial proceeding prior to the property being taken with the exception of "quick-take" condemnations. There are no exceptions for any agricultural property (as determined by SDAT) taken through this process.

This bill will ensure that the government pays a fair amount to each agricultural property owner impacted by the MPRP and future projects by for the additional value their land holds. The 350% adjustment from the highest appraisal value will protect farmers and require the state to weigh the necessity of projects against the harm it causes to the agricultural community.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 661.