



Maryland Grain Producers Association
118 Dundee Ave, Chester, MD 21619
Lindsay.mdag@gmail.com (p) 443-262-8491
www.marylandgrain.com

Date: February 11, 2025

Senate Bill 661 - Real Property - Condemnation - Compensation for Farm and Agricultural Property
(Protect Maryland Farm Lands Act)

Committee: Economic Matters

MGPA Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA supports Senate Bill 661 which requires that the fair market value for agriculture lands being actively farmed be 350% of the highest appraisal value in condemnation proceedings.

Taking of agricultural lands via eminent domain is very disruptive to the farming operation often taking large swaths of land out of production and easement agreements restricting access from one parcel to the other. For example, one of the proposed routes of the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project bisected one of our members farms in half. The easement agreement prohibited the use of equipment over 12' under the lines. This would not only restrict the farmers ability to farm under the transmission lines but also prohibit them from passing equipment under the lines to access fields on the other side of the easement making it nearly impossible to effectively manage both now halves of their farm. Additionally, the devaluation of farms due to eminent domain and the resulting transmission lines makes it difficult for farmers to meet the existing obligations for loans on their property and secure necessary lines of credit to continue operating the family businesses.

The proposed route for the MPRP appears to almost target preserved agricultural lands. These properties would have lower appraised values because the development rights have already been purchased during the easement process. This legislation would both help to avoid targeting of preserved properties and also adequately compensate farmers for lost revenue, land devaluation and inconvenience of continued farming.

MGPA urges your support of Senate Bill 661.

Thank you,

Lindsay Thompson

Executive Director