

In support of SB0189

Eminent Domain should be reserved for cases where there is a clear and urgent need for the state to take land from citizens. It should not be used for the benefit of wealthy private corporations. If the state takes land via eminent domain, the rights to that land should be held by the state – not by a corporation.

Specifically regarding SB0189, there may be a very negative unintended consequence – by preventing eminent domain from occurring in land held in agricultural and conservation easements, but not similarly protecting land in resources conservation zones, the oldest forests and other ecologically sensitive areas may actually be placed in greater risk because infrastructure development may be more likely to be funneled to those unprotected areas. Easement are often used to acquire and reforest land. The most mature, diverse forests are not eligible for easements because they are already forested. It would be tragically ironic if the recently planted groves with easements are spared while the older growth forests are effectively sacrificed instead. Please consider expanding the protections of the proposed SB0189 to include land in resource conservation zones. This land must be protected to ensure the ecological and climate goals of Maryland. Thank you.