

BILL: Eminent Domain - Agricultural and Conservation Easements – Prohibited Taking

COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings Committee

HEARING DATA: January 23, 2025

SPONSOR: Delegated Brooks and Hettleman

POSITION: Favorable

As a resident of Frederick County and a Maryland taxpayer, I am writing to express my strong support of SB 189, *Eminent Domain - Agricultural and Conservation Easements – Prohibited Taking*. The environmental benefits of setting aside land as preserved are well documented. The state and counties have a long and commendable history of preservation both through our laws and through funding.

In terms of combating climate change, preservation has proved cost effective. As a taxpayer I am happy to support this program and want it protected. Recently, Katie Stevens, Director of Agriculture for Frederick County shared the county contribution to this program:

As of July 1, 2024, Frederick County's totals were:

- **73,707** total acres permanently preserved
- **\$169.69 million** in total expenditures across all programs

Of these totals, 6 properties that are permanently preserved are impacted [by the PSEG MPRP transmission line] in Frederick County:

- 6 properties, totaling **1,292.9** acres
- Combined easement values **\$4.79 million**

It shows Frederick Counties commitment, of which I am proud. Although this is just a snap shot of the funds spent in the state and in the counties, these are not insignificant numbers.

However, when New Jersey company PSEG sees the map of Maryland, it does not see preserved and agricultural easements, it sees a blank slate that can be exploited for immense profits. PSEG stands to make billions of dollars for its shareholders in the course of 40 years by defacing and destroying land we have designated as precious and worth preserving.

Please pass this bill for the sake of the land owners, the environment and the basic fairness that our country was founded upon.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Law
1758 Wheyfield Drive
Frederick, Maryland, 21701