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Judiciary Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for HB1125 Community Engagement and Outreach Act of 2026
March 11, 2026

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 1125 – the Community Engagement and Outreach Act of 2026.

HB 1125 addresses a gap in our state capital project process: the lack of a consistent, transparent standard for community engagement when major state infrastructure projects are proposed.

This legislation was inspired in part by concerns raised by residents near the Patapsco State Park radio tower project, where a project with significant environmental and visual impacts proceeded with limited notice to the surrounding community.

HB 1125 establishes a clear and uniform framework for public engagement when state agencies undertake covered capital projects—projects exceeding \$2 million in cost or involving structures taller than 75 feet.

Under the bill, agencies proposing these projects must develop a community engagement plan that includes a plain-language project summary, impact information, and a map identifying affected areas within a one-mile outreach radius.

The legislation also requires meaningful outreach to the surrounding community, including:

- Direct mailed notice to residents and businesses within the outreach area
- Online and newspaper public notice
- At least one public meeting with virtual participation
- A 30-day public comment period

Finally, agencies must submit a report documenting outreach efforts and community feedback to the Department of Budget and Management, which will compile and transmit those reports to local governments and the General Assembly.

HB 1125 does not halt or delay projects. Instead, it ensures that when major state infrastructure is built in or near communities, those communities are informed, engaged, and given the opportunity to be heard.

By creating a transparent and predictable engagement process, this bill strengthens public trust while helping agencies make better-informed decisions.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1125.

Respectfully Submitted,
Delegate N. Scott Phillips