

BENJAMIN BROOKS
Legislative District 10
Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Energy Subcommittee

Chair, Joint Electric Universal
Service Program Workgroup



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 303
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3606 · 301-858-3606
800-492-7122 Ext. 3606
Benjamin.Brooks@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Windsor Mill Office
8419 Liberty Road, Suite B
Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244
410-496-4037

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 318
State Capital Program – Covered Projects – Public Engagement and Community
Outreach Requirements
(Community Engagement and Outreach Act of 2026)
Budget & Taxation Committee
February 4, 2026

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 318, Community Engagement and Outreach Act of 2026. SB 318 is in direct response to concerns raised by community members during the Patapsco Valley State Park Radio Tower project, which highlighted a significant gap in Maryland law. While local governments are often required to engage residents on projects that affect their communities, state agencies are not consistently held to the same standard. As a result, communities can be left out of the decision-making process for state projects that have substantial and lasting impacts on their neighborhoods, environment, and quality of life.

SB 318 creates a targeted outreach standard, ensuring that community members within one mile of the project's footprint are notified and given the opportunity to provide input when a project meets defined criteria.

Meaningful community input is not an obstacle to effective government, rather, it is a critical component of it. Early and transparent engagement helps identify local concerns, improves project outcomes, and builds public trust. When residents feel heard, projects are more likely to move forward with fewer conflicts, delays, and unintended consequences.

SB 318 establishes a clear, reasonable framework to ensure that state agencies seek and consider community input when undertaking projects that directly affect local residents. It promotes accountability, transparency, and equity, while respecting the expertise of state agencies and the lived experience of the communities they serve.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 318.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks".

Benjamin Brooks