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RE: House Bill 1024

Dear Delegate Rose and Members of the Economic Matters Committee:

I am writing in support of House Bill 1024. I am a concerned citizen of Carroll County impacted by the MPRP proposed transmission line and a Board Member of Stop MPRP, Inc, a not-for-profit organization educating impacted community members. I greatly appreciate the Committee addressing this issue. **You have an opportunity in this bill to safeguard lands our forefathers developed programs to protect, in perpetuity.** The fact that a high voltage transmission line that can be built ANYWHERE could be allowed to devastate Maryland's top grade farmsoil, a finite commodity, is fundamentally wrong.

Transmission lines can go along existing Department of Transportation right of ways, existing transmission right of ways and pass through brownfields. If we allow transmission projects to take precious farmland representing the number 1 industry in our state we are making a terrible mistake that will harm future generations. Additionally, if transmission projects abrogate properties in programs such as MALPF and Rural Legacy that are designed to protect increasing amounts of acreage to meet local and state Master Plan goals and waste the \$1.3 billion in tax payer dollars invested, we are risking our local food supply chain and further damaging the local economy. Some of the largest agritourism businesses in the state (Baughers and Gaver Farms for example) will be crossed by the MPRP transmission line, subjecting them to loss of USDA pick your own certification due to avian flu risk (birds roosting on transmission lines overhead) and clearcutting and spraying operations with herbicide and endangering visitors to shock from stray voltage and metal buildings and fencing, rendering them unable to afford their business insurance. Soil on farms will be compacted by construction and ongoing maintenance equipment and access roads. Precious farm soil rendered unusable. There are so many reasons that Transmission projects should not be permitted on Agricultural property it is impossible to list them all here.

The overarching reason is that power lines can literally go anywhere but contiguous blocks of farmland needed for efficiency of operation become more finite every year. We are setting a very dangerous precedent if we allow this to occur.

The transmission company will tell you that you see farms that operate with power lines dotted across the landscape. However, what was there first, the farm or the lines? The

point is farming near high voltage lines is dangerous due to stray EMFs, reduces tillable land due to compaction and herbicide spraying and as Michelle Cable, the Chair of the MALPF program stated in her testimony at the Maryland PSC Transource power line hearing, the preservation agreements do not allow for breaking the contract for transmission lines. The contracts state that farming is the highest and best use of that preserved property and some of the agreements even state that only an act of the General Assembly can break the Agreement. Our forefathers developed these programs to preserve and protect farming that is critical to our economy and health. Power lines should not be allowed on farmland, particularly land farmers have given up millions in development rights to preserve. If this is allowed, what will it do to the future of the preservation programs? The MALPF Chair also stated in her testimony in the Transource Case that pristine farmland that applies to the program will be prioritized for approval ahead of farms that have power lines. This will in fact destroy farmers confidence in these programs and due to the devaluation of the remaining property value it will destroy farmers ability to obtain credit to grow their business.

You have an opportunity to protect our food supply and finite farmland. Allowing this to occur will set a very dangerous precedent in these cases that has far reaching implications for Maryland and nationally. I urge you to approve this important Bill.

Most sincerely,
Jenny Teeter