

Testimony on House Bill - FAVORABLE

HB 1024 – Eminent Domain – Agricultural and Conservation Easements – Prohibited Taking

Economic Matters

March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mona Guilfoil and I live in Union Bridge in rural Carroll county, Maryland. I am writing to support HB 1024.

Fifty percent of the county 's land mass is in agricultural use according to Carroll county government. The goal of the county is to permanently preserve 100,000 acres. As of July 2024, over 80,000 acres are in preservation through various conservation programs in the county (<https://www.carrollcountymd.gov/government/directory/planning-land-management/agricultural-land-preservation/>). This puts Carroll among the nation's top five counties for acres preserved through conservation easements and makes it the most successful county land preservation effort in the entire state of Maryland.

So, we are a county of farmers, landowners, and regular citizens who benefit from the industry through jobs and taxes, food on the table, enjoyment of the view and wildlife, and preservation of a way of life that cherishes the land and the future it promises us.

This is under threat from the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), a proposed 67-mile long high-voltage transmission line that would run from Pennsylvania through Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick counties to northern Virginia's Data Center Alley. Some of that real estate in Carroll county is in the project's path and includes land that is in preservation. Taking this land through eminent domain is breaking promises made not only to landowners who have put their land and their trust in the county government, but to all county citizens who benefit from these conservation programs.

I understand that the reliability of our electrical grid is a public good and must be given consideration in weighing the benefits of a project such as MPRP against its costs and possible harms. In weighing those costs versus benefits have we evaluated alternative solutions? These include such strategies as placing lines underground, utilizing advanced transmission technologies (<https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2025/12/15/to-boost-electric-grid-states-look-to-advanced-transmission-technologies>), investing in distributed energy resources and localized energy grids. These solutions can help us meet our energy demands, shore up grid reliability and keep the promises made to preserve our land---at less cost and environmental harm.

Please give a FAVORABLE report for HB 1024. Save the land that We, the People have given to the future for preservation.

Thank you.