

March 3, 2026

To: Honorable Members of the Economic Matters Committee

From: Derek Seibel, 2490 Barrister Dr., New Windsor, MD

Honorable Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing today in support of HB1024 Eminent Domain - Agricultural and Conservation Easements - Prohibited Taking). My family chose to move to Carroll County because it boasts a rich agricultural heritage. Farming and agribusiness are woven into every aspect of the county – from the rural working landscape, cherished by the public, to their significant contribution to the county’s economy, jobs, and revenues. The steadfast commitment to retaining the rural character of Carroll County has been repeatedly and continuously affirmed by 45 years and \$267 million of local public policy. Marylanders take pride in the *Maryland the Beautiful Act*, which set the laudable goal of conserving 30% of the state's land by 2030 and 40% by 2040.

The fragility of land preservation has come into sharp focus over the past year as the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) has advanced through the CPCN process with the Maryland Public Service Commission. To Maryland citizen’s horror, we now know that a small cabal of PJM board members can override the promises made (via legally binding contracts) between landowners and the state of Maryland. It is disgraceful that the unanimous will of the public, backed by hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, can be completely disregarded by unelected members of PJM and an out-of-state utility company (PSEG). This outrageous proposal undermines the entire concept of agricultural land preservation in the state of Maryland. Why would anyone willingly devalue their property to place it in preservation if it can be seized anyway, against the will of every citizen of the county in which it resides, on the whim of an RTO? The legitimacy of representative government in Maryland is at stake.

I respectfully urge this Committee to provide a favorable recommendation for HB1024 and to subsequently pass HB1024 to affirm that the state of Maryland values its commitments to its citizens over inflating corporate profits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input, for your time, and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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