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Testimony in support of Bill HB1024

To: Economic Matters Committee

From: Robin S. Kable

My husband and I own Wakefield Farm in Carroll County, Maryland. I am writing to express my support for bill HB1024 which prohibits the state from using eminent domain to take property that is protected by a perpetual agricultural or conservation easement.

Our farm includes 146 acres of farm land, pastures, our home and multiple barns and outbuildings. We grow truffles, hay, corn, soy beans and sell specific pathogen free sheep.

We decided to place our farm into the Carroll County Farm Preservation program the day we purchased the farm. We gave up development rights, water rights and mineral rights. We were happy to do so because we would be preserving the farm in perpetuity. The land would be preserved for future generations and would help to sustain the environment. At no time was it mentioned that there was a possibility that our land could be taken by eminent domain. The people of the state of Maryland paid to preserve our farmland and should be assured that this promise is kept.

The currently proposed MPRP project would devastate our farm economically and personally. We would not be allowed to grow crops or graze livestock anywhere near the power lines because we use metal fencing which is prohibited by PSEG. We currently use a helicopter to seed our cover crops in the winter which would not be possible. We would not be allowed to grow truffles trees near the power lines due to their height and the requirement for airport type fencing to keep out animals that would damage the trees. Several of our children are involved with our farm operation. Our son has built a home that unfortunately would be very close to the power lines and PSEG proposes to use his driveway for their very heavy industrial trucks and equipment. Another son has approval from the farm preservation board of directors to build a house. He and his family have not started construction because the house would be directly under the proposed power lines. In addition,

we know that farms and homes that are near power lines have a huge loss of value and the owners are not compensated for this loss. In short, our entire farm operation would be negatively impacted both personally and economically.

I urge you to support bill number HB1024 for the people of the state of Maryland.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss this issue.

Best Regards,

Robin S. Kable