

March 3, 2026

RE: HB1024 – Written Testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

We strongly support HB1024.

The taking by eminent domain of privately owned property that is subject to a perpetual agricultural or conservation easement is in direct conflict with the intent of such easements. When these easements are entered into via contract between a property owner and the state or any other governing body, the latter is committing to preservation of the property and likewise, the property owner and any successors are opting to make a similar commitment. If the governing body reserves the right to violate the preservation of the property, particularly if for the benefit of a private third party, it appears that the governing party is misrepresenting their commitments made as part of the easement agreement. Many property owners are entering into these easements because they believe it ensures that the land is preserved, along with the rural scenery and way of life.

Once the governing body opts not to continue preserving the property as intended per the easement, it erodes the conservation easement and brings into question whether either party should thereafter be bound by the requirements of the easement.

Our home in Freeland, MD is an active 76-acre farm, and it is subject to a conservation easement. We relocated here because of the rural setting, and we understood that as part of this property being in a conservation easement, similar to several other surrounding properties, that it would be preserved. We are now at risk of having our property being taken by the state via eminent domain as part of the MPRP power line project, and we have been dragged into legal battles to maintain the conservation principles outlined in our easement. Such a taking by the state would destroy our land and our way of life.

We ask that you please support HB1024 and ensure that the state honors its pre-existing and future commitments to local agriculture and preservation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Charlie & Morgan Bond
Freeland, MD, 21053