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**SB 201 – Public Utilities – Transmission Lines – Advanced Transmission Technologies  
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
February 19, 2026  
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee. My name is Laurel Peltier, and I am a proud member of AARP Maryland and a resident of Baltimore County. AARP Maryland represents more than 850,000 members across the state, making it one of the largest membership-based organizations advocating on behalf of older Marylanders. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB201. We thank Senators Brooks, Hettleman, and West for introducing this legislation on behalf of Maryland ratepayers.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people to live their best lives as they age. Our work focuses on issues that matter most to older adults and their families, including affordable utilities, financial security, health care access, and protection from financial exploitation.

SB 201 modernizes Maryland’s oversight of overhead transmission lines by:

- Expanding the definition of “qualified generator lead line” to include advanced transmission technologies.
- Requiring applicants for new transmission lines to provide detailed planning, alternatives analysis, and stakeholder engagement evidence.
- Mandating the Public Service Commission (PSC) to consider advanced technologies and alternatives before approving new transmission lines.
- Instituting periodic reporting by transmission line owners on congestion, costs, and technology options.

AARP Maryland supports this bill because:

**1. Modernization and Ratepayer Protection**

- The bill ensures Maryland utilities consider the latest transmission technologies, which can increase grid efficiency and reliability while potentially lowering costs for consumers.
- By requiring alternatives analysis and cost containment efforts, the bill aims to prevent unnecessary or uneconomic transmission spending that could burden ratepayers.

## **2. Transparency and Accountability**

- Applicants must provide comprehensive evidence of planning and stakeholder engagement, including environmental impacts and community input, before new transmission lines are approved.
- The periodic reporting requirement increases transparency about grid congestion and costs, enabling better oversight and public accountability.

## **3. Grid-Enhancing Technologies**

- The bill prioritizes the use of grid-enhancing technologies (GETs), such as dynamic line rating and advanced conductors, which can boost grid capacity without building new lines, thus saving money and reducing environmental impacts.
- GETs can help Maryland meet future energy demands and integrate more renewable energy sources efficiently.

## **4. Environmental and Social Considerations**

- Mandates analysis of environmental impacts and social issues for all proposed transmission projects and alternatives.
- Encourages solutions that minimize land acquisition and community impacts.

## **5. Alignment with Regional Planning**

- Requires coordination with PJM Interconnection and other regional planning processes to ensure Maryland's grid investments are strategic and cost-effective.
- Supports Maryland's leadership in grid modernization and renewable integration.

## **6. Advocacy Framing**

- This bill puts Maryland ratepayers first by requiring utilities to upgrade existing lines and consider advanced technologies before building expensive new transmission projects.
- Periodic reporting and robust alternatives analysis will help prevent unchecked transmission spending and ensure investments deliver real value to consumers.
- Grid-enhancing technologies offer a path to a more reliable and affordable energy future.

These are unusual times for Maryland's older adults, as many find the current electricity and gas rates truly unaffordable. The health and safety of our seniors have been negatively affected as they scramble to pay for utilities to avoid terminations and keep the power on.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support SB201.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick, AARP Maryland Advocacy Director at [swestrick@aarp.org](mailto:swestrick@aarp.org) or by calling 410-310-0374.