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February 17, 2026

To: Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

From: Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Subject: Favorable Testimony for SB 201 Public Utilities - Transmission Lines - Advanced Transmission Technologies

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of SB 201: Advanced Transmission Technologies. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. In 2023 Audubon worked with partner organizations, government agencies, and industry to author an innovative study title *Birds and Transmission: Building the Grid Birds Need*, which includes advanced transmission technologies as key tools to improve our grid infrastructure, while protecting wildlife.

SB 201 is a critical step forward in ensuring Maryland's grid is reliable, efficient, and prepared for future energy demands. This bill gives the PSC more opportunities to review and applicants more opportunities to demonstrate how advanced transmission technologies (ATTs) and grid-enhancing technologies (GETs) can modernize our transmission infrastructure in a way that accommodates new generation, while minimizing disruptive new transmission lines. Furthermore, ATTs facilitate better integration of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, which are crucial for protecting Maryland's environment. By improving the transmission system's capacity and flexibility, these technologies help ensure that electricity can be delivered efficiently and reliably.

Beyond improving grid reliability and efficiency, ***ATTs provide significant benefits for wildlife, particularly birds. These technologies help optimize existing transmission infrastructure, reducing the need for new transmission lines that have the potential to fragment habitats and pose collision risks to birds.*** By enhancing grid efficiency, ATTs can minimize environmental disruption while supporting the responsible expansion of renewable energy. SB 201 provides an opportunity for Maryland to lead in renewable energy development while safeguarding the state's diverse bird populations. By supporting ATT deployment, this bill enables us to advance a cleaner, more reliable grid without additional conservation impacts.

SB 201 will help reduce the threats that birds and people face because of transmission line development. And it will hold Maryland up as a leader in conservation planning, renewable energy, and transmission policy, protecting birds and the places they need to survive now and into the future. Audubon urges a favorable review of SB 201.

Sincerely,
Jim Brown
Audubon Mid-Atlantic