DAVID S. LAPP
PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

WILLIAM F. FIELDS
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

JULIANA BELL
DEPUTY PEOPLE'S COUNSEL

OPC
OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL
State of Maryland

6 ST. PAUL STREET, SUITE 2102
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21202
WWW.OPC.MARYLAND.GOV

BRANDI NIELAND
DIRECTOR, CONSUMER
ASSISTANCE UNIT

CARISSA RALBOVSKY
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

BILL NO.:	Senate Bill 0201/House Bill 0040 – Public Utilities - Transmission Lines - Advanced Transmission Technologies
COMMITTEE:	Education, Energy, and the Environment Environment and Transportation
HEARING DATE:	February 19, 2026 (EEE) February 3, 2026 (ENT)
SPONSOR:	Senators Brooks, Hettleman, and West Delegate Charkoudian
POSITION:	Favorable

****

The Office of People's Counsel (OPC) respectfully offers the following comments in support of SB 201/HB 40, which seeks to incorporate the use of advanced transmission technologies (ATTs) and other alternatives into transmission planning and ultimately reduce costs to customers.

Specifically, SB 201/HB 40 would require each owner or operator of an overhead transmission line to demonstrate to the Public Service Commission that they have considered the use of ATTs and other alternatives (1) as part of an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN), primarily required for construction of a new transmission line; and (2) in a regular report that identifies areas of transmission congestion, projected or actual costs of the congestion, and the feasibility of using ATTs or other alternative means of addressing transmission congestion at a lower cost to customers.

ATTs encompass a host of technologies including:

- high performance conductors, which allow for increased line capacity, higher transmission efficiency, and reduced thermal sag;
- storage as a transmission asset, which substitutes batteries for new transmission lines and can enable faster and cheaper transmission system upgrades than traditional transmission lines; and

- grid enhancing technologies (GETs), which squeeze more performance out of existing transmission assets using advanced power flow controls, dynamic line ratings, and topology optimization.

ATTs can increase the useful life of existing transmission assets, decrease congestion costs, allow new generation to interconnect more quickly and more cheaply, defer expensive transmission upgrades, and enable transmission system expansion with less disturbance of previously unused land.

ATTs can enable more rapid deployment of transmission capacity upgrades that are required for new generation to interconnect to the grid. Some projects drop out of the PJM interconnection queue because once they are studied, they are required to pay for significant transmission system upgrades that will take years to construct. By enabling cheaper and more rapid transmission system upgrades, ATTs support generation interconnection at lower cost and more quickly. One recent study found that use of GETs in five PJM states could allow an additional 6 gigawatts of new capacity to come online within the next three years.[1]

ATTs can also decrease land use concerns. Storage as a transmission asset can "pre-flow" energy over existing lines so that the line can functionally deliver more energy than the maximum line rating at times of peak demand. While current PJM rules do not allow storage to act as a transmission asset, such a framework has been approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in other regions and the policy has been studied by PJM.[2] Similarly, advanced conductors unlock the possibility that lines with higher ratings can use existing transmission line routes and towers, or allow new transmission builds to have smaller footprints, thus limiting the need to build on new land.

ATTs can provide significant savings for transmission costs. For example, evaluations of ATTs deployed in the Southwest Power Pool—another regional transmission organization that stretches from North Dakota to Oklahoma—found that GETs increased the utilization level of certain high voltage transmission lines by 16 percent.[3] As amended, however, the bill only requires reporting on any ATT solutions a utility, in fact, has studied; it does not require a study of any additional ATT solutions that the utility has not considered. The bill's added value is informational, by providing a reporting mechanism that could give additional insights to the PSC in its CPCN hearings rather than necessarily spurring adoption of ATTs that had not been considered.

This bill takes an important step toward maximizing the utility of existing transmission infrastructure in Maryland and is likely to prevent unnecessary investments in new infrastructure that could prove costly to ratepayers.

---

[1] Katie Mulvaney et. al., *GETting Interconnected in PJM*, RMI (2024).
[2] *See* Storage as a Transmission Asset Issue Details, PJM Interconnection, LLC.
[3] Brattle Group, *Building a Better Grid* (Apr. 20, 2023) at 5.

Recommendation: OPC requests a favorable committee report on SB 201/HB 40.