

**Tuesday March 3, 2026**

**TO:** Brian Feldman, Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, and Committee Members

**FROM:** Humna Sharif, Climate Adaptation Director, The Nature Conservancy; Michelle Dietz, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy

**POSITION:** Support SB 598 Electric Companies - Cost Containment Plans - Requirement (Securing Affordable, Valuable Investments in Next Generation Grid Solutions (SAVINGS) Act)

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 598 offered by Senator Hester. TNC's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work in more than 70 countries and all 50 states in the United States. With the support of more than one million members globally, TNC has been working to conserve, protect, and restore ecosystems and species for nearly 75 years around the world.

Climate change threatens to undo decades of our successful conservation work and fundamentally alter our future. TNC is committed to helping reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to no more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures. This goal cannot be achieved without a rapid transition to a clean energy economy. A clean energy future will require a different approach to energy and transmission planning and procurement and a predictable and flexible energy system. Modifying the current approach is essential to the well-being of nature, our economy, our communities, and our planet.

SB 598 would allow Maryland to make critically needed efficiency improvements to our grid and help lower Marylanders' electricity cost. Under this bill, starting on January 1, 2027, and every 3 years thereafter, electric companies will be required to submit to the Public Service Commission (PSC) Cost Containment Plans for electric distribution and transmission system planning. These Cost Containment Plans are to include solutions that avoid or minimize capital expenditures, including all non-wires solutions and distributed energy resource integration strategies.

SB 598, similar to HB40/SB201 and SB386/HB897 introduced this session, elevates the role of Advanced Transmission Technologies (ATTs) and Grid Enhancement Technologies (GETs) in securing reliable and cost-effective electricity. SB 598 defines ATTs as being inclusive of: Grid-Enhancing Technologies (GETs), High-Performance Conductors, and Storage used as Transmission. GETs are further defined to include Dynamic Line Rating, Advanced Power Flow Control, Topology Optimization, and Energy Storage used as Distribution or Transmission.

As our state’s energy demand grows, and as more renewable energy, and distributed energy sources are connected to the grid, the traditional vertically integrated system design is no longer sufficient to meet Maryland’s energy needs. Including ATTs and GETs in existing and new transmission lines can unlock our grid’s potential to deliver safe, reliable and clean power to Marylanders in a more cost-effective way.

TNC recognizes that Maryland needs new transmission solutions to power the future and that planning, siting and constructing high-voltage transmission lines is a time-consuming process, requiring thoughtful planning and analysis. New transmission lines can take up to 10 years to build,<sup>1</sup> but Marylanders are facing the pressure of rising energy bills now. In the near term, ATTs and GETs are tools we can use to ensure we’re getting the most out of the grid we have.

Our state’s energy troubles are not unique; many other states are stepping up to the challenge with legislation similar to SB 598 that offer alternatives to expand grid capacity in the time it takes to construct new power lines. For example, in 2024, Maine passed LD 589 requiring a review every five years of available GETs that could be newly implemented by utilities to reduce the need for investment in grid infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> California passed SB 1006 in 2024 requiring that each transmission utility prepare a biennial feasibility study of projects using GETs to achieve increased capacity to connect new renewable energy and zero-carbon resources to the grid.<sup>3</sup> Utah passed HB 212 in 2025 to promote the use of GETs that reduce energy waste and save consumers money by optimizing the existing transmission system.<sup>4</sup> RMI’s 2024 [Getting Connected in PJM](#) analysis demonstrated that GETs deployment in five PJM states (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia) could accelerate interconnection of 6.6 gigawatts of new generation, saving PJM customers more than \$1 billion annually.<sup>5</sup>

TNC recognizes Maryland’s need to support grid modernization strategies that use the latest technologies to meet our state’s growing energy demand. It is imperative that utilities upgrade our grid efficiently, cost-effectively, and as rapidly as possible, while also protecting sensitive ecosystems and ensuring community buy-in during the process. TNC encourages the state to adopt a diverse approach that is inclusive of ATTs and GETs in providing relief to Marylanders. We commend Senator Hester for introducing the legislation and advancing smart and cost-effective energy policy in Maryland. **Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 598.**

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<sup>1</sup>Utah passes legislation to deploy Grid-Enhancing Technologies | National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. (2025, April 22). National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. <https://ncetenviron.org/articles/utah-passes-legislation-to-deploy-grid-enhancing-technologies/>

<sup>2</sup> LD 589, SP 257, Text and Status, 131st Legislature, second regular session. (n.d.). [https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/display\\_ps.asp?LD=589&snum=131](https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?LD=589&snum=131)

<sup>3</sup> Bill Text - SB-1006 Electricity: transmission capacity: reconductoring and grid-enhancing technologies. (n.d.). [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240SB1006](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1006)

<sup>4</sup> HB0212. (n.d.). <https://le.utah.gov/~2025/bills/static/HB0212.html>

<sup>5</sup> Mulvaney, K., Siegner, K., Teplin, C., Toth, S., & Rocky Mountain Institute. (2024). GETting interconnected in PJM. In RMI. [https://rmi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2024/02/GETs\\_insight\\_brief\\_v3.pdf](https://rmi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2024/02/GETs_insight_brief_v3.pdf)