

**Thursday, February 19, 2026**

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

**FROM:** Michelle Dietz, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy; Cait Kerr, State Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy,

**POSITION:** Support SB201 Public Utilities - Transmission Lines - Advanced Transmission Technologies

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 201 offered by Senators Brooks, Hettleman, and West. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering solutions that secure clean water, air, and healthy, secure living environments.

SB 201 would alter the definition of a "qualified generator lead line" to be inclusive of advanced transmission technologies. Advanced transmission technologies as highlighted by the bill include grid-enhancing technologies, high performance conductors, and energy storage used as transmission. TNC is supportive of SB 201 as it allows for responsible building of overhead transmission lines and promotes the use of advanced transmission technologies.

TNC recognizes the need for Maryland 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 as efficiently, cost-effectively, and rapidly as possible, while also protecting sensitive ecosystems and ensuring community buy-in during the process. This legislation contains important provisions to meet Maryland's energy distribution needs.

SB 201 requires that an applicant for a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) for the construction of an overhead transmission line shall include the following in its application:

- Evidence that the applicant considered any local, state, or federal government transmission planning processes and any transmission planning processes required by PJM interconnection;
- Alternatives to the proposed transmission;
- An analysis of advanced transmission technologies and whether the use of such technologies will enhance the value of the new lead line, including increased value to the ratepayer;
- Alternative routings for the overhead transmission line;
- Technologies or modifications to one or more electric distribution systems in the state that could avoid the need for the transmission line;
- The cost to ratepayers;
- Resource adequacy;

- Energy efficiency and demand response;
- The impact of the project on the environment; and
- A review of an integrated electric transmission–distribution system to address the need for the overhead transmission line.

Additionally, the legislation also requires applicants for the CPCN to provide an analysis of the transmission line route, including but not limited to acquisition of land and rights of way, and the applicant’s experience working with local communities and stakeholders. We need to act now to ensure that our grid is capable of distributing energy to meet increasing demand from the generation source to consumers as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. There is also a concurrent need to modernize our grid in order to take advantage of new and emerging technologies that can reduce costs to ratepayers by balancing supply and demand.

We commend Senators Brooks, Hettleman, and West for introducing the legislation. The provisions of SB 201 highlighted above will ensure that applicants for CPCN have considered critical details of overhead transmission lines in the planning process. **Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB201.**