



TESTIMONY FOR HB0928
Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity - Transmission Lines -
Applicability and Waivers

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Embry

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0928 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Construction of new transmission lines is costly and fraught with problems. Currently, an electric company can apply for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) to build a new transmission line and even that step can be waived for good cause (no definition given for good cause).

In order to bring some clarity to this process, HB0928 requires that, if the CPCN is waived for good cause, the Public Service Commission must evaluate –

- the cost of the construction on ratepayers
- the impact of the construction on the environment
- any other matter the Commission considers appropriate.

This is particularly important because the construction of underground transmission lines is generally considered 'good cause' and the CPCN is waived. However, these projects cost hundreds of millions of dollars and they are not going through the same rigorous process as above-ground transmission lines. This does not serve the people of Maryland at all, and is a travesty in terms of the regulatory process.

We believe these are reasonable measures that should have always been taken especially for underground transmission lines, but given the all but non-existent or perfunctory approval of building new transmission lines without any real evaluation, these measures need to be spelled out.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.