



Maryland Farm Bureau

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March 3, 2026

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of HB1244 – Overhead Transmission Lines and Eminent Domain – Property Value – Damages**

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit this letter in support of HB1244, relating to overhead transmission lines, eminent domain, and compensation for residential property owners affected by nearby condemnation actions.

HB1244 provides important and long-overdue protections for Maryland residents whose property values are harmed when land is taken for the construction of overhead transmission lines. Under the bill, a property owner may bring an action for damages if the condemned property is:

- Within 300 feet of their residence, and
- Taken as part of constructing an overhead transmission line or related infrastructure.

Maryland Farm Bureau strongly supports this approach. Property owners, especially those in rural and agricultural communities, are often disproportionately impacted when large infrastructure projects alter landscapes, diminish home values, or disrupt long-standing land uses. HB1244 ensures that residents can seek compensation for diminished property value and may also recover reasonable attorney fees if damages are awarded.

The bill further strengthens fairness and accountability in condemnation proceedings by requiring that:

- When the assessed value exceeds the condemning authority's appraisal, courts must award the defendant's counsel fees and charge certain costs to the plaintiff.
- Similar counsel-fee protections apply on appeal, ensuring fairness at all stages of the process related to overhead transmission line condemnations.

These updates reflect a meaningful shift toward protecting homeowners from bearing uncompensated financial losses associated with eminent domain actions for transmission infrastructure.

For years, Maryland Farm Bureau has opposed unnecessary takings and supported stronger protections for property owners. While past legislation focused heavily on preserved or agricultural land, HB1244 expands essential safeguards to residential properties directly impacted by nearby transmission line condemnation decisions. This is a logical and greatly needed extension of property-rights protections.



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Maryland residents deserve fairness, transparency, and meaningful compensation when public utility infrastructure harms the value of their homes. HB1244 accomplishes exactly that.

For these reasons, Maryland Farm Bureau respectfully urges a favorable report on HB1244.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Hough". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends to the left.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough, though@marylandfb.org with any questions