

# Maryland PIRG

## **HB928- Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity - Transmission Lines - Applicability and Waivers**

**Environment and Transportation**

**February 24th, 2026**

**Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG**

**Favorable**

*Maryland PIRG is a state based, small donor funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state. We work to find common ground around common sense solutions that will help ensure a healthier, safer, more secure future.*

This bill will close a loophole that exempts underground transmission lines from getting a Public Service Commission (PSC) Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). Interstate transmission lines are largely managed by PJM with oversight by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and PJM, our regional grid operator, and thus the CPCN process is a critical aspect of Maryland's limited oversight on transmission.

There is simply no good reason to exempt all underground transmission from this process.

HB928 requires the PSC to consider specific factors when determining whether to waive, for good cause, the requirement to obtain a CPCN for transmission, specifically:

- 1) the cost of construction on ratepayers;
- 2) the impact of construction on the environment; and
- 3) any other matters the PSC deems appropriate.

This change will help ensure the energy customers, regulators, and the public understands the cost of underground transmission proposals, which, while offering other benefits, are generally more expensive than overhead transmission. It will also ensure underground transmission proposals receive the same public engagement and approval processes that has been the norm for overhead transmission in the state. This added transparency and engagement is particularly important for Maryland's regulated utility monopolies.

**We respectfully request a favorable report.**