SB0630_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON SB#0630 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Overhead Transmission Lines and Eminent Domain - Property Value – Damages

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0630, **Overhead Transmission Lines and Eminent Domain - Property Value – Damages**

This bill is submitted to attempt to add strong protection against harms that will occur to property owners if the MPRP is permitted to be constructed.

The proposed Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), a 67-mile high-voltage transmission line traversing Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick Counties, is projected to have significant negative impacts on property values, with estimates suggesting a decline of up to 40-45% for homes and farms in close proximity to the transmission line. The project is expected to affect hundreds of properties directly, with 65 residential buildings located within 200 feet of the proposed Right-of-Way (ROW) and another 234 within 200-500 feet. [1]

The Valleys Planning Council has declared: [2]

> Residents who live on or near the proposed MPRP route are opposed to the project, which would create a permanent scar across farmland, preserved land, and residential land. Property owners face the prospect of having their land taken through the use of eminent domain. Sensitive environmental land, wildlife habitat, and historic properties would be damaged.
> Others are opposed because bucolic views would be permanently ruined. The loss of permanently preserved land poses an existential threat to land preservation in Maryland.
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> A decrease in property values. Businesses that are worth less. An increase in the price all Marylanders pay for energy. There are many reasons the MPRP in its current form should not be allowed to move forward.

This bill is submitted to add a financial cost to PJM if they proceed on this project despite the harm it will cause. It will authorize the owner of property used for residential purposes to bring an action to recover damages incurred as a result of the value of the property being diminished from the use of eminent domain to take property and construct an overhead transmission line within 300 feet of the property owner's residence; and requiring that reasonable fees be awarded to counsel for the defendant in a condemnation proceeding and the costs be charged against the plaintiff under certain circumstances.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0630.

[1] Google AI Search “mprp effects on property values in Maryland”
[2] https://www.thevpc.org/latest-news/9432/