



House Bill 40

Public Utilities - Transmission Lines - Advanced Transmission Technologies

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 3, 2026

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 40. This bill calls for additional considerations and requirements for the construction of transmission lines.

The 2026 Maryland General Assembly is facing a historic number of complex generational challenges. One of the loudest issues to arise has been Maryland opposition to the Piedmont Reliability Project. The Project, which crosses Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick Counties, effectively creates an “extension cord” across some of our state’s prime agricultural lands, providing Pennsylvania-generated energy to Virginia-based data centers, with little direct benefit to Marylanders. As the General Assembly debates how to address this and other energy challenges, one of the biggest underlying issues will be how to prioritize now-competing state priorities (ie, energy demands and environmental goals).

As drafted, HB 40 requires the Public Service Commission and applicants to consider advanced transmission technologies more deeply as a means to avoid unnecessary community, environmental, or ratepayer impacts. As many transmission infrastructure upgrades may uniquely be accomplished by upgrading existing lines or using existing land, counties join the sponsor in wanting to protect both our mutual constituents and the finite number of conserved lands.

This is common sense legislation which seeks to address conflicts between Maryland’s growing demand for energy and billions invested into other pro-climate policies to date. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to issue HB 40 a **FAVORABLE** report.