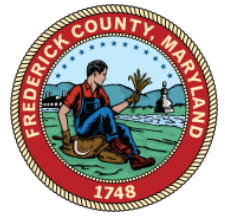


# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 8, 2024**

## **FREDERICK COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER STEVE MCKAY, COUNCIL PRESIDENT BRAD YOUNG, AND COUNCIL MEMBER MASON CARTER RELEASE STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO THE MARYLAND PIEDMONT RELIABILITY PROJECT (MPRP)**

FREDERICK, MD – Frederick County Council Member Steve McKay, along with Council President Brad Young and Council Member Mason Carter have released the following statement:

Several weeks ago, members of the Frederick County Council learned about the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP). This project came as a surprise to us, just like it did for many of our residents, and just like it did for residents in Carroll County and Baltimore County. The MPRP would be constructed by the Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) as part of a large regional utility system upgrade managed by Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection, or PJM. PSEG seeks approval for a new 70-mile 500kV transmission line between southern Pennsylvania and the Doubs substation near Adamstown. PSEG has proposed several alternative alignments for this transmission line but there is one inescapable conclusion – regardless of which alignment may be selected the MPRP project will severely impact Frederick County, our residents, their properties, and for many, their livelihoods.

The transmission line has been proposed primarily to meet anticipated energy demands from data centers in Northern Virginia, and secondarily for anticipated energy needs of future Frederick County data centers. Frederick County Council Member Steve McKay, Council President Brad Young, and Council Member Mason Carter do not question the need for data centers, or the energy required to power them. Data centers support critical governmental, economic, and personal daily computing needs.

This project, however, raises serious concerns. Council Member Steve McKay, Council President Brad Young, and Council Member Mason Carter are compelled to challenge PJM and the manner in which it specified and managed the project bidding that led to the

selection of PSEG and MPRP. PJM had a responsibility to minimize the impact of its project in the County by prioritizing project proposals that would maximize the use of existing power line rights of way (ROW). Instead, it rejected those proposals and selected one with alignments that would have unacceptable impacts on the developed, populated areas in the southern and eastern portions of Frederick County. PJM failed in its responsibility.

Baltimore Gas & Electric (BGE) currently has a 500 kV transmission line ROW that spans the MPRP connection points. This BGE ROW could and should have been proposed and approved by PJM to expand capacity by building two parallel 500 kV transmission lines in the existing ROW. First Energy is taking exactly this approach now, doubling the capacity of its 500 kV transmission line between the Doubs substation and Virginia within its existing ROW, avoiding the need to acquire private property. Whether as a BGE proposal or a joint proposal between BGE, PSEG, or another utility company, this should have been PJM's prioritized solution.

Council Member Steve McKay, Council President Brad Young, and Council Member Mason Carter are also concerned that the MPRP is premature and may not be consistent with PJM's requirements under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Order 1920. FERC Order 1920 requires PJM to analyze its grid to include new requirements, some of which PJM has not been following. FERC Order 1920 also requires PJM to conduct longer term planning, with greater public engagement and transparency, and greater consideration of the use of advanced technologies that may eliminate the need for new transmission lines. Until PJM is in full compliance with these requirements, they should not move forward with the MPRP.

Instead, PJM approved PSEG's MPRP proposal which will directly impact peoples' homes, their farms – many in agricultural preservation – their businesses, and their property values. Some impacts would severely curtail use of properties where people live and farm, others would force them out altogether. The scale of these impacts on County residents are unacceptable. One proposed alignment runs through a planned residential community in New Market and bisects the Peace and Plenty Rural Historic District – Maryland's first such historic agricultural preservation designation, and a nationally-recognized model for historic agricultural preservation. All of the proposed alignments will impact sensitive natural resource areas and threaten Frederick County's agritourism industry.

For these reasons and more, Frederick County Council Member Steve McKay, Council President Brad Young, and Council Member Mason Carter oppose the MPRP project as proposed and stipulate the following:

- 1) We call upon PJM to revisit its proposal award to PSEG, and to prioritize solutions that maximize the use of the existing BGE ROW.

- 2) We call upon the FERC to critically examine PJM's proposal award to PSEG and determine if it was done properly and in the public interest.
- 3) We further call upon the FERC to require PJM to comply with the requirements of FERC Order 1920 and to place the MPRP project on hold until Order 1920 requirements have been satisfied.
- 4) We call upon the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) to accept this letter into its public record as a statement of opposition by the named Frederick County Council Members to the MPRP project and urge the PSC to reject PSEG's proposed alignments for failing to meet the procedural and substantive standards required for a certificate of public convenience and necessity.

The County Council will discuss this issue, and the potential for a statement from the entire Council, at their meeting on 27 August 2024.

For additional information, contact Council Member McKay at 301-600-1034 or via e-mail at [SMcKay@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:SMcKay@FrederickCountyMD.gov).

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