

# Sugarloaf Conservancy

3409A Urbana Pike Frederick, Maryland 21704 e-mail: [info@sugarloafconservancy.org](mailto:info@sugarloafconservancy.org) web: [www.sugarloafconservancy.org](http://www.sugarloafconservancy.org), [nomoretowers.org](http://nomoretowers.org)

October 31, 2011

Dear Delegate:

When PATH submitted their initial application to the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC), Sugarloaf Conservancy asked why utility companies were not considering the rebuilding of outdated transmission lines, which could dramatically increase transmission capacity. PATH replied that their proposed line had to be built first since there was insufficient capacity to shut down existing lines. Now that PJM (regional authority) has acknowledged there is no need for PATH within their 15 year planning window, the time is right for the utility companies and our state agencies to aggressively invest in the rebuilding of lines to increase capacity.

In an attempt to explore the situation, Sugarloaf Conservancy contacted Maryland's Energy Administration and the Department of Natural Resources (PPRP). The PPRP were in the process of preparing a Long-Term Electricity Report as mandated by an executive order from Governor O'Malley and it was anticipated that they might have included rebuilding in the report. The responses received from both agencies indicated that they did not feel they had jurisdiction; each stating it was not in their mandate to investigate even the possibility of rebuilding existing transmission lines.

Dominion Virginia Power is in the process of rebuilding the Mt. Storm to Doubs line (part of an alternative to PATH), which will increase the capacity over the existing line by 66%. It would make sense for Maryland electric companies to proceed to do the same now before a critical need for more power arises, necessitating the building of new transmission lines. This would reduce the need for confiscation of private property through eminent domain by simply rebuilding lines in existing right-of-ways and would be much less costly for Maryland ratepayers.

If all or many of the lines statewide were rebuilt over time, when the economy finally recovers, the necessary transmission lines would be updated and ready. This would also be a great time to consider burying the lines where possible to avoid the great costs and outages from summer storms and winter ice. Burying lines can occur now in the existing rights of way while the overhead lines remain in service, no need for an interruption of service to occur.

Sugarloaf Conservancy requests that our elected officials take the appropriate action to remedy this situation by passing bills to empower or mandate that the Public Service Commission, the Maryland Department of Energy, or PPRP coordinate a statewide study of this issue. Sugarloaf Conservancy appreciates your due consideration of this request and would be happy and willing to discuss any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Douglas S. Kaplan  
President

301-874-0584

[Doug.Kaplan@SugarloafConservancy.org](mailto:Doug.Kaplan@SugarloafConservancy.org)