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Allegheny Energy opposes HB1535

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HB1535 is a bill sponsored by Delegate Sue Hecht that would clarify what constitutes an "electric company" under Maryland law, and which would help ensure adequate financial responsibility in case of accident.

The need for such a measure has emerged because Allegheny Energy is seeking to construct and operate "PATH," a transmission line and substation, via a corporate structure that fixes responsibility jointly on an electric company that owns only 5 percent of the project and another entity that owns 95 percent, but as an LLC has severely limited liability in case of accident.

Sugarloaf Conservancy, a citizens' group that seeks to reduce adverse impact from the PATH Project, testified at the bill's hearing on March 30 that if HB1535 is not passed, it would leave a loophole that Allegheny Energy and other electric companies could exploit to minimize their financial responsibility.

Sugarloaf Conservancy's concern is borne out by opposition to the bill by Allegheny and many other electric companies. The Committee on Economic Matters is expected to vote on the pending legislation within the next few days.

DOUGLAS S. KAPLAN, president, Sugarloaf Conservancy

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