

OPPOSE House Bill 1766 & Senate Bill 1110

Utility Facilities Act; associated facilities of an electrical transmission line.

Patron: Delegate Gregory D. Habeeb and Senator William M. Stanley, Jr.

Reasons to OPPOSE HB1766 and SB1110

1. Preservation of Local Authority – The General Assembly granted local governments zoning authority for the purposes of protecting the public health, safety and welfare. Zoning decisions shape our communities. Centralized decision-making related to zoning and the use of a specific site by distant representatives of the state, fails to tap local expertise and knowledge of the area and could lead to worse outcomes and greater discontent in the affected community.
2. Industrial Nature of Associated Facilities – Associated Facilities include any station, substation, transition station, and switchyard facilities. Electric substations can be as small as a residential lot and as large as 40 acres. The equipment necessary for its operation can contain highly flammable toxic fluids, produce loud noises and require round-the-clock lighting for security purposes. Though some efforts can be made to disguise it, these are industrial facilities.
3. Associated Facilities Are Not Transmission Lines - Associated Facilities are distinguishable from, and more intrusive to, their surrounding environment than a transmission line. It is reasonable for such facilities to be subject to local zoning, while continuous transmission lines are exempt because of the onerous nature of navigating local zoning ordinances for all the acreage over which transmission lines cross.

Overview

SB1110 and HB1766 would shift decision-making authority from local governments to the State Corporation Commission for associated facilities (substations, switchyards transition facilities) related to transmission lines. The General Assembly, in its wisdom, has recognized that decisions on zoning for the purposes of the public health, safety and welfare, are best left in the hands of local governments. Given the site specific nature of associated facilities for transmission lines and the localized impacts, our local governments are the appropriate entities for oversight.

The Piedmont Environmental Council
Dan Holmes
dholmes@pecva.org
(571) 213-4250
pecva.org

Virginia Conservation Network
Kristie Smith
kristie@vcnva.org
(804) 420-8288
vcnva.org