

# HOUSE BILL 48

C5, N1  
HB 120/22 – ENT

(PRE-FILED)

5lr1071

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By: **Delegates Healey, Martinez, and Williams**

Requested: October 2, 2024

Introduced and read first time: January 8, 2025

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Railroad Companies – Condemnation Authority – Application**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing that certain authority of railroad companies to acquire  
4 property by condemnation does not apply to an entity that owns or operates a  
5 railroad powered by a magnetic levitation propulsion system; and generally relating  
6 to the condemnation authority of railroad companies.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

8 Article – Public Utilities

9 Section 5–405 through 5–408

10 Annotated Code of Maryland

11 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

13 Article – Public Utilities

14 Section 5–409

15 Annotated Code of Maryland

16 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Public Utilities**

20 5–405.

21 (a) A railroad company or its authorized agent may agree with the owner to  
22 purchase, use, occupy, or divert the owner’s land, earth, gravel, stone, timber, streams,  
23 materials, or improvements that the company wants for the proper construction or repair  
24 of the railroad company’s roads or works.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) The company may acquire the property by condemnation under Title 12 of the  
2 Real Property Article if:

3 (1) the company cannot agree with the owner of the property; or

4 (2) an owner:

5 (i) is a minor, is adjudged to be mentally incompetent, or is under  
6 any other legal disability to contract; or

7 (ii) is absent from the county in which the property is located when  
8 the company wants the property.

9 5-406.

10 (a) (1) A railroad company may change the location or grade of any portion of  
11 its road if the company finds the change is necessary for any reasonable cause, including to  
12 avoid:

13 (i) inconvenience to public travel;

14 (ii) dangerous or difficult curves or grades; or

15 (iii) unsafe or unsubstantial grounds or foundations.

16 (2) A change of location or grade under this section shall follow the general  
17 route of the existing road.

18 (3) A railroad company may enter on and take land and make surveys  
19 necessary to make the change in location or grade in accordance with Title 12 of the Real  
20 Property Article.

21 (b) (1) A railroad company is liable to the owner of the land on which the road  
22 was constructed for any damages caused by a change in location or grade of the road.

23 (2) The amount of damages determined shall be paid to the owner or  
24 deposited into court.

25 (3) An owner shall claim damages within:

26 (i) 30 days after actual notice of the intended change has been given  
27 to the owner, if the owner resides on the premises; or

28 (ii) 60 days after publication of notice in a newspaper in general  
29 circulation in the county, if the owner is a nonresident.

1 (c) If a railroad company condemns land under this section, the condemnation is  
2 binding on the company, unless the company chooses to abandon the location within 30  
3 days after making the condemnation.

4 5-407.

5 (a) A railroad company and the municipal corporation, public officer, or public  
6 authority that owns or has control of any road, street, alley, or other public way or ground  
7 necessary to locate any part of the railroad may agree on the manner, terms, and conditions  
8 allowing the railroad company to use or occupy the road, street, alley, or other public way  
9 or ground.

10 (b) If the parties are unable to agree and the railroad company needs to use or  
11 occupy the road, street, alley, or other public way or ground, the railroad company may  
12 acquire the property by condemnation in accordance with Title 12 of the Real Property  
13 Article.

14 (c) (1) A railroad company that lays track on any public street, road, alley, or  
15 other public way or ground is responsible for any damage done by the location of the track  
16 to private property on or near the public way or ground.

17 (2) The owner of the private property shall bring a civil action for damages  
18 under this subsection within 2 years after the completion of the track.

19 (d) A railroad company may not pass through Baltimore City without the consent  
20 of the Mayor and City Council.

21 5-408.

22 The power of a railroad company to condemn land and other property under this  
23 subtitle includes the power to condemn, for railroad purposes, private crossings or ways  
24 and land and other property to provide substitute outlets.

25 5-409.

26 (A) [Sections] **EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION,**  
27 **§§ 5-405, 5-406, and 5-407** of this subtitle apply to all railroads operated by electricity,  
28 cable, or other improved motive power, whether the property proposed to be condemned is  
29 located in a county or Baltimore City, where streets and alleys have not been opened and  
30 occupied as city streets.

31 (B) **SECTIONS 5-405 THROUGH 5-408 OF THIS SUBTITLE DO NOT APPLY TO**  
32 **AN ENTITY THAT OWNS OR OPERATES A RAILROAD POWERED BY A MAGNETIC**  
33 **LEVITATION PROPULSION SYSTEM.**

34 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect

1 October 1, 2025.