



TO: Members, House Appropriations Committee
FROM: Paul Pinsky - Director, MEA
SUBJECT: HB 300 - School Buildings – Solar Technology – Solar Panels on Schools
DATE: February 7, 2023

MEA Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

House Bill 300 requires local schools systems to consider whether to construct new schools with solar panels on the roofs of the schools, and provide to the Interagency Commission on School Construction an explanation for a decision not to include solar panels as part of the construction of a school.

The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) commends this legislation and the efforts of the sponsor. However, it may be appropriate to become more aggressive with the implementation of solar on new-construction schools.

Currently, Education Article § 5-319(a) already requires “[a]n evaluation of the use of solar technologies, including photovoltaic or solar water heating, based on life cycle costs” during the design phase for both school renovation and new school construction. Similar to this bill, that provision of law requires “a report that explains why the use of the technology is not appropriate” if “an evaluation determines that solar technologies are not appropriate for a construction or major renovation project”.

MEA amendments would *require* that all new school construction to include rooftop solar installations unless a local school board can demonstrate an actual impediment to the effective generation of electricity using a solar photovoltaic installation.

On-site energy generation provides a myriad of benefits. Generating energy where it is used reduces the need for additional transmission and distribution investments, combining onsite generation with storage or other energy assets can make buildings, or even campuses, more resilient to catastrophic events, and the deployment of renewable energy helps us, as a State, reach our energy and environmental policy goals.

For the foregoing reasons, MEA urges the committee to issue a **favorable report as amended**.

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 19, before “construction” insert an opening bracket; and in the same line, after “or” insert a closing bracket.

On page 2, strike beginning with “CONSIDER” in line 6 down through “SCHOOL” in line 13 and substitute “, **EXCEPT AS SPECIFIED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, INSTALL ROOFTOP SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS ON ALL NEWLY CONSTRUCTED SCHOOLS.**”

(2) A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MAY PETITION THE INTERAGENCY COMMISSION TO EXCLUDE A NEW SCHOOL FROM PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION ONLY BY A SHOWING THAT A SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM IS NOT FEASIBLE DUE TO A LACK OF SOLAR INCIDENCE.”