

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates  
Appropriations Committee - For the Hearing on  
School Buildings – Solar Technology – Solar Panels on Schools (HB 0300)  
February 7, 2023  
SUPPORT**

Free State PTA represents over 50,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. ***House Bill 300 aligns with Free State PTA's environmental legislative agenda which supports using renewable energy sources and electrifying schools in order to move to a net zero model.***

House Bill 0300 would require local school education systems (LEA's) to provide an explanation for a decision not to include solar panels as part of the school construction to the Interagency Commission on School Construction. There are several benefits to investing in solar panels or other renewable energy sources when building schools. Switching to solar can bring significant cost savings over time which has been proven in other districts<sup>1</sup>. According to the U.S. Department of Energy estimates, K-12 schools spend more than \$8 billion per year on energy and energy costs in many districts are second only to salaries. Energy savings can free up much needed educational resources. Also, a solar powered school reduces pollutants in the environment and can move jurisdictions closer to their clean energy goals. Installing solar panels and moving towards net-zero schools gives the opportunity for students to learn about renewable energy and how they can make positive environmental impacts.

This bill does not require LEA's to install solar panels, it only requires LEA's to consider them when planning for construction, so therefore it is not a mandate. It is time we make a more concerted effort to build net-zero schools, and House Bill 0300 moves us to that goal.

Free State PTA urges a favorable vote in support of House Bill 0300.

***Marla Posey-Moss***

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/climate/solar-energy-school-funding.html>