

SB0235 Solar Panels on Schools.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0235

School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Bill Sponsor: Senator West

Committee: Budget and Tax

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0235 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

With the passing of the School Construction legislation two years ago, projects for construction of new schools and upgrades for existing schools are suddenly flush with funding. Constructing a new school, or replacing the roof on an existing school without installing solar panels is absolutely foolish considering the incentives available, the projected increase in the cost of fossil fuels and the imperative to reduce greenhouse gasses. Additionally, it sends the wrong message to the youth of this state – that we can't act in our own best interest.

As far as incentives for installing solar panels, the Climate Solutions Now Act passed last session provides additional funds to build net zero schools which would require rooftop solar. The Inflation Reduction Act also allows tax-exempt organizations, like schools, to take advantage of solar tax credits and grants are coming soon for EPA's clean schools program. And then there is innovative financing like participation in demand response programs, alternative school financing, power purchase agreements, and community solar, all of which schools can examine.

The financial benefits of solar on school budgets due to the projected increase in fossil fuel costs over the long term are reason enough to invest in this technology. Additionally, solar can be used as a teaching opportunity for Career Technology Education students and students learning the sciences, which will help provide a workforce for the building decarbonization that we already are required to undertake.

Our members believe strongly that the state should encourage and enhance solar energy production and we believe that installing solar in schools is one way to do that. We also would like to encourage consideration of energy storage, which will make schools more resilient during power outages and help offset grid management issues with solar coming online. Finally, we encourage IAC to be required to set up a clearing house so that information on solar grants, tax credits, alternative financing, etc. can easily be available.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB235 West FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Christopher West

Position: FAV

CHRIS WEST
Legislative District 42
Baltimore and Carroll Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee



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February 1st, 2022
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
The Honorable Guy Guzzone
3 West Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401

Re: Senate Bill 235 - School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Dear Chairman Guzzone and members of the Committee,

Over the past decade, there has been a considerable increase in the development and use of green technologies. Solar panels in particular have become more commonplace. Furthermore, as the use of this technology has become more prevalent, its cost has diminished.

One issue triggered by the increased use of solar panels is where they should be located – on prime agricultural land or on the roofs of large buildings.

The genesis of this bill occurred three summers ago, when I was invited to an event at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium to celebrate the completion of a project of installing solar panels on the roof of the Cow Palace. The Cow Palace is a huge building with a very large, flat roof. I learned that a solar company had initiated contact with the management of the Fairgrounds and had inquired if the Fairgrounds would permit the company to install solar panels on the roof of the Cow Palace. The company advised that the Fairgrounds would not have to pay any money at all for the solar panel installation. Moreover, on account of the electricity generated by the solar panels and then uploaded onto the electrical grid, the Fairgrounds would receive the benefits of a portion of that electricity and consequently would pay less for its electricity and, over time, would save well over a million dollars on its electrical bill.

Like the Cow Palace, modern schools have flat roofs which sprawl over wide expanses. Thanks to the “Built to Learn Act”, Maryland counties as well as Baltimore City are going to construct lots of schools over the course of the next decade.

In light of the opportunity presented, Senate Bill 235 states that for each school constructed in Maryland from July, 2025 to June, 2034, the local school system responsible for the school construction must consider installing solar panels on the roof of the school. The bill does not impose a mandate requiring solar panels to be installed, merely a requirement that the local school systems consider installing solar panels. The caveat is that if a local school system elects not to install solar panels, it must submit an explanation to the State Commission on School Construction. The bill then provides that the IAC must in turn submit an annual report to the Governor, the President of the State Senate and the Speaker of the House listing the school construction projects in each jurisdiction as to which the local school system decided not to

install solar panels, including the rationale provided by the local school system as to why the decision was made not to install the panels.

Senate Bill 235 thus will gently nudge the local school systems to consider the efficacy of installing solar panels on school roofs. I believe that if they take a hard look at solar panels, they will conclude that the installation of solar panels will save the new school a lot of money over the decades. The installation of solar panels on these prominent government structures instead of on prime agricultural land will redound to the benefit of the State for many decades to come.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 235 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

SB23 - Clean Water Action - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Ranson

Position: FAV

SB235: School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Senate Budget and Taxation

February 1, 2023

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

As Maryland strives towards clean energy goals, solar siting is a critical facet that needs to be addressed. School buildings are a ripe opportunity for low-conflict solar siting - they are public buildings with large footprints.

Solar on rooftops, especially large rooftops, is a win-win: it produces energy on an area of land while other activities take place in the building below. This bill also targets the most cost-effective time to ensure that buildings are compatible with large-scale solar power, by requiring it during construction.

For these reasons we urge a favorable report.

Thank you,

Emily Ranson
Clean Water Action
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SB0235 TESTIMONY .pdf

Uploaded by: Jared Schablein

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY FOR SB0235

School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Bill Sponsor: Senator West

Committee: Budget and Tax

Organization Submitting: Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

Person Submitting: Jared Schablein, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB235 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive movement on the Lower Eastern Shore.

Projects for the construction of new schools and renovations for existing schools are suddenly saturated with funds due to the passage of the School Construction Law two years ago. It would be absolutely foolish to construct a new school or replace the roof of an existing one without solar panels being installed in considering the financial incentives available, the expected increase in the cost of fossil fuels, and the necessity to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, it conveys the incorrect message to the state's youth that we are incapable of acting in our own best interests.

As far as incentives for installing solar panels, the Climate Solutions Now Act passed last session provides additional funds to build net zero schools which would require rooftop solar. The Inflation Reduction Act also authorizes solar tax credits available to tax-exempt groups like schools, and funds for the EPA's clean schools program will be available soon. Then there is alternate school finance, power purchase agreements, community solar, and involvement in demand response programs, all of which schools can research.

The economic benefits of solar on school budgets due to the anticipated long-term rise in the cost of fossil fuels are adequate reasons for investing in this technology. In addition, teaching science and career technology education students about solar energy will help prepare a workforce for the decarbonization of structures that we have already mandated to implement.

Installing solar in schools, in the viewpoint of our members, is one strategy to incentivize and increase the production of solar energy by the state. We also wish to encourage the use of energy storage, which will improve schools' resistance to power outages and assist mitigate grid management concerns caused by solar energy becoming operational. Last but not least, we support requiring IAC to establish a clearing house so that details on solar incentives, tax credits, alternative financing, etc. can be easily accessible.

It is for these reasons the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB235_MDSierraClub_fav 1Feb2023.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Posner

Position: FAV



P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: SB235 “School Buildings – Solar Technology – Solar Panels on Schools”

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 1, 2023

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB235, which provides that Maryland school systems that construct new schools between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2034 must consider whether to include solar panels on the school rooftops and, if a school system decides not to include solar panels for a particular school, it must provide an explanation to the Interagency Commission on School Construction.

Last year, the General Assembly established ambitious climate goals for Maryland in the Climate Solutions Now Act, including reducing the state’s greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2031 (compared to the 2006 level) and achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. In order to meet these goals, it is imperative that Maryland significantly increase its generation of clean energy, including solar and offshore wind.

Schools can play an important role in this effort. By placing solar panels on school rooftops, school systems can be symbolic leaders in their communities to encourage solar expansion, including solar panels on residential and commercial rooftops, community solar, and utility-scale solar. In addition, solar panels on school rooftops may serve as a tangible example and learning experience for students, as they learn about the energy sector transformation needed to mitigate climate change.

This bill will ensure that school systems carefully consider whether to include solar in their school construction plans. One of the challenges in expanding rooftop solar is that the rooftop in question must be of a sufficient quality (e.g., it is not economical to place solar on an aging rooftop where, in a few years, the panels would need to be removed to repair the roof and then reinstalled). Another issue is that the rooftop must not be shaded, and should be oriented in a direction that maximizes exposure to the sun. Accordingly, an ideal time to include solar panels for a school is when the school is initially being built, when the rooftop will be new and the buildings can be designed to maximize the rooftop solar exposure.

We appreciate that one provision of the bill is that the Interagency Commission will be required to publish a list of schools built during the covered time period without solar panels, together with the explanations provided by the school districts for why solar panels were not included. This may provide valuable feedback to identify any obstacles to including solar panels in schools, which in turn may help identify solutions or work-arounds.

At the front end, when school systems are considering whether to include solar panels, it would be helpful for the bill to also promote a degree of transparency, so that school communities can provide input on this important decision. We encourage the sponsor to consider an appropriate amendment in this regard.

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 70,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on this bill.

Mark Posner
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Josh Tulkin
Chapter Director
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SB0235-DTMG-FAV-2-1-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Olivia Bartlett

Position: FAV



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Budget and Taxation

Testimony on: SB0235 – School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 1, 2023

Bill Contact: Senator Chris West

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as several neighboring counties. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all Maryland residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. SB0235 addresses these goals by incentivizing the switch to clean renewable energy in Maryland.

The School Construction legislation passed two years ago provided funding for construction of new schools and upgrades for existing schools. Constructing a new school or replacing the roof on an existing school without installing solar panels is foolish considering the multiple incentives available and the imperative to reduce the greenhouse gasses causing global warming as quickly as possible.

The financial benefits of solar on school budgets due to the projected increase in fossil fuel costs over the long term are reason enough to invest in solar technology. The Climate Solutions Now Act passed last session provides additional funds to build net zero schools which would require rooftop solar. The Inflation Reduction Act also allows tax-exempt organizations, like schools, to take advantage of solar tax credits and grants are coming soon for EPA's clean schools program. There is also innovative financing, like participation in demand response programs, alternative school financing, power purchase agreements, and community solar, which schools can evaluate in order to install solar panels.

Furthermore, solar technology can be used as a teaching opportunity for Career Technology Education students and students learning the sciences, which will help provide a workforce for the building decarbonization that we already are required to undertake.

Maryland should encourage and enhance solar energy production and installing solar panels on schools is one way to do that. Failure to do so sends the wrong message to Maryland's children – that we don't care about their future and that we can't act in our own best interest. Schools should also consider installation of energy storage, which would make them more resilient during power outages and help offset grid management issues with solar coming online.

For all these reasons, DTMG strongly supports SB0235 and encourages a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
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SB235_IndivisibleHoCoMD_FAV_RichardDeutschmann.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard Deutschmann

Position: FAV



SB235 – School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Testimony before

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

February 1, 2023

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of SB235, to encourage the use of solar energy systems on our newly constructed schools. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Sen. West for sponsoring this important legislation.

This bill simply requires local school boards, when in the process of designing and building a new school facility in their jurisdictions, to strongly consider the use of modern, clean solar energy systems to provide electrical power or domestic hot water for the building. And, if they choose not to move ahead with solar energy, that they provide a written report to the Interagency Commission explaining why they decided not to include this in their facility planning. Many school boards in the state of Maryland are appropriately focused on budgets, capital expenditures for new facilities, and funding for ongoing operations of these complex sectors of the county or jurisdiction. However, many of them downplay or minimize the opportunity and need for sustainability, clean energy and long term energy planning. In addition, our students could be attending schools where clean energy systems are operational, providing a chance to study the data and learn about these clean energy generation systems. Some may still be in the “demonstration” phase, while as a state, we need our schools to be full partners in execution of clean energy and other sustainability goals. As a result, many of them are behind in meeting statewide goals for greenhouse gas emissions reductions. This bill will encourage a greater use of cleaner energy in our school systems, while improving opportunities for our students to learn about solutions to the global climate crisis.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully request a favorable report on this legislation.

Richard Deutschmann
Columbia, MD 21045

SB0235 - Solar on Schools - Climate Parents of Pri

Uploaded by: Joseph Jakuta

Position: FWA

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Testimony on: SB 0235 - "School Buildings – Solar Technology – Solar Panels on Schools"

Organization: Climate Parents of Prince George's

Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta, Lead Volunteer

Position: Favorable With Amendments

Hearing Date: January 25, 2023



Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for considering our testimony to SB 0235, which concerns new requirements for the Interagency on School Construction (IAC) to consider for solar installation on schools. Climate Parents is a campaign to reduce climate change causing pollution in our schools, and our group is active in Prince George's County. In particular, we recently worked directly with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) technical staff and other advocates to develop a first in the national School Climate Change Action Plan.

The time is right for solar installation on schools. The Climate Solutions Now Act passed last session provides additional funds to build net zero schools, which often did not pencil out due to solar costs. The Inflation Reduction Act also allows tax-exempt organizations, like schools, to take advantage of solar tax credits and grants are coming soon for EPA's clean schools program. And then there is innovative financing like participation in demand response programs, alternative school financing, power purchase agreements, and community solar, all of which schools can examine.

There are so many benefits of solar on schools too. In light of volatile fuel and electricity prices solar can have a real positive impact on school budgets. Solar can be used as a teaching opportunity for Career Technology Education students and students learning the sciences. There are also the state-wide benefits of reducing the amount of pollution from power production.

1. There should be requirements that energy storage also be required to be considered as part of the analysis. Storage, namely batteries, will make schools more resilient during power outages and help offset grid management issues with solar coming online.
2. The requirements should extend to any school that is undergoing a roof replacement. The main barrier to solar installation on existing schools is roof age
3. We encourage the reporting to require collecting data on cost of install and unit size and preferably collection of best practices for sharing information.
4. There have also been favorable outcomes from having a small portion of the solar panels accessible for STEM learning and allowing the students to view information about solar generation, as was done at Holabird Academy in Baltimore. We encourage the IAC to give consideration for this element in design submissions.
5. Finally, we encourage IAC to be required to set up a clearing house so that information on solar grants, tax credits, alternative financing, etc. can easily be found by all twenty-four LEAs.

Now is the time for us to act. Schools will save money and bring hope and knowledge to the next generation through the path outlined in SB 235.

We encourage a **FAVORABLE with Amendment** report for this important legislation.

SB235_School Buildings Solar_Budget Tax_CJW_FAV.pd

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FWA



Committee: Budget and Taxation
Testimony on: SB 0235 - School Buildings – Solar Technology – Solar Panels on Schools
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable with Amendments
Hearing Date: February 1, 2023

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today. The Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorable with amendments on SB235.

SB 0235 would establish new requirements for solar installation on schools for the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC). The time has never been better for solar installation on schools, and we encourage you to promote solar for schools. The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 provides additional funds to build net zero schools, especially to augment funding to install solar panels. Additionally, the Inflation Reduction Act allows tax-exempt organizations, like schools, to take advantage of direct payment incentives (in lieu of tax credits), and grants are coming soon for EPA’s Clean Schools Program. There also are innovative financing opportunities such as demand response programs, alternative school financing, power purchase agreements, and community solar. Schools can take advantage of these funding opportunities, as well as benefit from the lower cost of electricity in the future, while they also contribute positively toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, solar-powered electricity can be a teaching opportunity for Career Technology Education students and in science classes.

We urge you to consider the following amendments to strengthen SB235. First, include energy storage as part of the analysis. Electricity storage (i.e., batteries) will make schools more resilient during power outages and help with grid management issues related to increased renewable generation. Second, the requirements should extend to any school undergoing a roof replacement, as the main barrier to solar installation on existing schools is the age and condition of the roof. Third, the reporting should require collecting data on the cost of installation, the system size, and preferably best practices for sharing among schools. Finally, we encourage the IAC to be required to set up a clearinghouse so information on solar grants, tax credits, alternative financing, etc. can easily be accessed.

Schools can and should be part of the “climate solution” and can save money by installing solar panels. Therefore, we urge a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT** report for SB 235.