



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