



**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.