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**Written Testimony**

**House Bill 908 - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program  
 House Economic Matters Committee | February 23, 2023**

**Support**

**Background: HB908** would update the Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot, making it a permanent program; require that the community solar energy generating system provide at least 40% of its kilowatt-hour output to low-income and moderate-income subscribers; and authorize consolidated billing for certain charges.

**Written Comments:** The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* means to repair the world in which we live. As the advocacy arm of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, we represent organizations that work to educate the community on sustainability and make strides towards repairing the world. One of these entities is *The Pearlstone Center* in Reisterstown, MD, a conference center and farm that employs and teaches sustainable practices.

*The Pearlstone Center* currently operates on 85% solar, with 10% coming from onsite solar and 75% coming from the Associated's large scale solar project. *The Pearlstone Center* has a partnership with Neighborhood Sun, which currently allows employees to participate in a small-scale community solar program from the panels installed across the campus. To date, about 30 households participate in this program.

HB908 ensures that Maryland remains a leader in solar energy. As the pilot is set to expire at the end of 2024, it is critical that this bill pass **this year** so there is no lapse in service. Beyond the pocket-book benefits allowed by community solar, and the carve out that ensures that 40% of the program's beneficiaries will be low-to-moderate income families, this program will continue to play a vital role in ensuring that Maryland reaches the renewable energy goals.

**For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB908.**

***The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.***