



Date of Hearing: February 23, 2023

TESTIMONY ON HB908 – POSITION: FAVORABLE
Electricity – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program

To: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and Members, Economic Matters Committee

FROM: The Jewish Community Relations Council, Betsy Singer, Laura Salganik, Co-Chairs

The JCRC is submitting this testimony in support of HB908, Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Act.

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) supports action to slow climate change. Repair of the world (*tikkun olam*) is a guiding tenant of our Jewish faith. We are compelled to act to prevent massive changes to the Earth’s climate as we face rising temperatures due to excessive greenhouse gases trapped in Earth’s atmosphere as a result of human activity. Enhancing clean sources of energy such as solar and wind and replacing carbon-generating sources of energy is essential to life on Earth.

HB908 will make the Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program permanent rather than allowing it to end in 2024. Since 2017, the Pilot program has been successful because it extended access to solar energy to homeowners, renters and businesses that are then able to realize the lower cost of this clean energy.

The bill considers environmental justice by requiring expansion of community solar access to low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents. At least 40% of the kilowatt-hour output would be designated for LMI subscribers. The bill also strengthens the program by allowing “utility consolidated billing” for energy assistance households to become solar subscribers and apply energy assistance benefits to all electricity charges.

The bill also protects forests by encouraging energy generation on developed land, such as clean landfill sites, industrial areas, rooftops, and parking lots. Finally, the bill will provide certainty to solar businesses and support the State’s solar workforce, while helping Maryland move closer to its solar generation targets.

For these reasons and the importance of action to enhance the transition to clean energy, the JCRC supports passage of HB 908.