



**Testimony of
Jake Springer
Nexamp**

**Submitted to the
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
House Economic Matters Committee
HB 908 - Electricity - Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program
February 23, 2023**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the Committee’s consideration of HB 908. Nexamp strongly supports this bill, which would transition the Pilot Program for community solar into a permanent program. We greatly appreciate Delegate Clippinger’s leadership on this legislation and all things community solar here in Maryland. Our company has been an active participant in the Community Solar Pilot Program since 2017 and we are proud to have built the Program’s first LMI project, located in Queen Anne’s County, serving 51% low-and moderate-income customers.

Nexamp was founded over a decade ago, and since that time has grown from a small residential solar installer to a fully integrated clean energy company and one of the leading providers of community solar nationwide. The growth and success of our program can be attributed to our fair and equitable subscription program. Our program was designed to ensure that everyone – regardless of income, credit history, roof space or geographic location – can participate in community solar. We do not run credit checks on prospective customers, there is no cost to join our program and no penalty for leaving the program (we ask for 90 days’ notice), and we offer a stable, guaranteed discount of at least 10% against the customers’ standard electricity rates. Even as rates change over time, our customers are guaranteed the same fixed discount for as long as they choose to participate in one of our community solar farms.

We are proud of the program we have built and the access to clean, renewable energy that it has afforded residents, small businesses, non-profits and others. We have developed projects with reserved offtake for low-and moderate-income customers across the country and here in Maryland; and we are actively working to see community solar, and LMI access in particular, succeed in Maryland.

Maryland was a leader nationwide when the Community Solar Pilot Program launched in 2017, and numerous other states have since followed suit. Now, with the Pilot Program sunsetting in 2024, HB 908 would take the current Community Solar Pilot Program and transition it to a permanent option for Maryland residents to be able to participate in solar energy, regardless of where they live or their economic status. The Pilot Program has proven to be successful and the strides it has made in providing an equitable clean energy option here will be accelerated with a permanent program.

HB 908 is critical for retaining and expanding investment in Maryland

Nexamp has actively invested resources in Maryland as a result of the Pilot Program, and is prepared for further investments if HB 908 is enacted. Nexamp has six community solar projects operational or under construction spread across Maryland, and we hope to bring forward many more in the future. Those



projects bring with them substantial investment in local communities, creating jobs, generating local tax revenue and providing locally sourced clean energy.

Particularly in light of the Inflation Reduction Act and the significant federal dollars behind clean energy and community solar, Maryland has a real opportunity to capture local investment dollars if the state has the programs in place to allow for these projects. HB 908 provides that path.

HB 908 expands access for low-and moderate-income families

Importantly, HB 908 doubles down on the commitment to low-and moderate-income Marylanders, requiring each community solar project to dedicate at least 40% of the project to those families. This is a major commitment to these families and communities, and ensures they are not only not left behind, but are active participants in the state's path to a clean energy economy. In addition, HB 908 removes onerous barriers to LMI participation through needed improvements to the verification process.

HB 908 recognizes needed areas for improvement

HB 908 also responds to areas of the program that will need to be improved on for a permanent program. In particular, the bill would ask the PSC to evaluate a number of options for improving the billing and crediting process. This is critical, because the benefits of community solar cannot occur at a ribbon-cutting—they are only realized over time, and if participants are able to see the credits reach their bills accurately and predictably.

HB 908 would task the PSC with overseeing the implementation of consolidated billing, which is of great importance to LMI participants, but would benefit all. Consolidated billing would allow customers to pay one bill, rather than two bills—one to their utility and the other to their community solar project. In addition to the obvious simplicity, this process allows LMI customers to participate in community solar and continue to receive the full value of their Energy Assistance benefits. Consolidated billing is already an option for retail suppliers, and should be available for community solar as well.

We urge you to support HB 908 and a continued community solar program. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jake Springer
Policy Director, Mid-Atlantic
Nexamp
jspringer@nexamp.com