

**BENJAMIN BROOKS**  
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Education, Energy, and the  
Environment Committee



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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS OF SB613**  
**Electricity – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program**

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee  
February 28, 2023

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on SB613, Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program. The purpose of this bill is to make the community solar a permanent part of Maryland's solar energy portfolio and include other improvements to the program.

Over seven years ago, Maryland was a trailblazer by being one of the first states to embrace community solar with the enactment of the Community Solar Energy Pilot Program. Today, approximately half of the states and the District of Columbia have laws that support community solar. Without enactment of legislation this session, Maryland's Pilot program is scheduled to sunset, leaving a substantial disruption to the community solar development market.

SB613, as amended, has the support of the community solar development community, environmental community, low and moderate income (LMI) advocates, consumer groups, and many others; and will do the following:

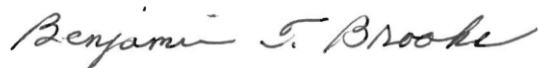
1. Make the Community Solar Pilot Program permanent.
2. Require developers to dedicate at least 40% of a community solar project's capacity to LMI families.
3. Require the option of consolidated billing for community solar subscribers.
4. Expand co-location to further incentive projects in difficult to build areas – like rooftops, industrial zones, brownfields, and parking lots. In addition, it would allow co-location on farmland in which Agrivoltaics are used. Agrivoltaics is the simultaneous use of land for both solar power generation and active agriculture.

Community solar provides homeowners, renters and businesses equal access to the economic and environmental benefits of solar energy generation regardless of where they live or their income-level. SB613 ensures that all Marylanders who pay their own utility bills can subscribe to most community solar projects as long as the project is in their utility service area (BGE, PEPCO, etc.).

Community solar creates jobs, generates economic activity, and increases local revenues. Subscribers of community solar will save money on their electric bills. In addition, community solar will also reduce peak demand electricity, which means all ratepayers will save money. Finally, passage of this legislation will attract investors and leverage billions of federal dollars for renewable energy development in Maryland.

For these reasons, I am requesting a favorable report.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Benjamin T. Brooks". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With kindest regards,".

Benjamin Brooks