



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF MARYLAND

The Maryland Episcopal
Public Policy
Network

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0613
FAVORABLE**

Electricity—Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program

TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
FROM: Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Co-Chair, and Al Todd, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Maryland, Diocese of Maryland
DATE: February 28, 2023:

The Episcopal Church at large and the Diocese of Maryland in particular embrace creation care. The Church has established programs to support our congregations in their work to care for the environment. Congregations across Maryland have made a strong commitment to our environment. These faith communities have reduced stormwater and water pollution, planted trees to improve air quality, installed renewable energy and energy conservation projects, and mobilized their members to take action at home.

We believe we have a sacred moral obligation to care for the creation God has given us. We recognize that the love and care we give to the environment that sustains us is a direct reflection of our love and care for each other. Addressing the climate crisis is the challenge of our time and one we believe demands our attention. We know the Maryland legislature shares this belief. Solar power is a key way to support climate strategies but all Marylanders cannot currently benefit from solar energy. Maryland's community solar program has the potential to increase access to clean energy and to reduce the energy burden of thousands of low- to moderate-income (LMI) Maryland households while generating solar power on developed land, such as rooftops and parking canopies of our cities and towns.

The community solar pilot program has been in place since 2017, providing 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. This bill would make community solar a permanent part of Maryland's solar energy portfolio, and add other improvements to the program that ensures the program works for everyone. The Diocese of Maryland supports a favorable outcome for permanent community solar.

We request a favorable report regarding SB 613.