



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Appropriations

Testimony on: HB0300– School Buildings - Solar Technology - Solar Panels on Schools

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

Bill Contact: Delegate Harry Bhandari

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as several neighboring counties. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep all Maryland residents healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. HB0300 addresses these goals by incentivizing the switch to clean renewable energy in Maryland.

The School Construction legislation passed two years ago provided funding for construction of new schools and upgrades for existing schools. Constructing a new school or replacing the roof on an existing school without installing solar panels is foolish considering the multiple incentives available and the imperative to reduce the greenhouse gasses causing global warming as quickly as possible.

The financial benefits of solar on school budgets due to the projected increase in fossil fuel costs over the long term are reason enough to invest in solar technology. The Climate Solutions Now Act passed last session provides additional funds to build net zero schools which would require rooftop solar. The Inflation Reduction Act also allows tax-exempt organizations, like schools, to take advantage of solar tax credits and grants are coming soon for EPA's clean schools program. There is also innovative financing, like participation in demand response programs, alternative school financing, power purchase agreements, and community solar, which schools can evaluate in order to install solar panels.

Furthermore, solar technology can be used as a teaching opportunity for Career Technology Education students and students learning the sciences, which will help provide a workforce for the building decarbonization that we already are required to undertake.

Maryland should encourage and enhance solar energy production and installing solar panels on schools is one way to do that. Failure to do so sends the wrong message to Maryland's children – that we don't care about their future and that we can't act in our own best interest. Schools should also consider installation of energy storage, which would make them more resilient during power outages and help offset grid management issues with solar coming online.

For all these reasons, DTMG strongly supports HB0300 and encourages a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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