



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: SB 613 – Electricity – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program

SPONSOR: Senators Brooks, *et al.*

HEARING DATE: February 28, 2023

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS SB 613 – Electricity – Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program**, which makes permanent the Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program and places special emphasis on low-income and moderate-income communities. It also addresses issues brought about by industry and governmental representatives over the years such as the expansion of income verification methods, consolidated billing, and the collection/reporting of environmental impacts from community solar systems.

The Community Solar Energy Generating System (CSEGS) Act was codified in the Public Utilities Article, Maryland *Annotated Code* (“PUA”) in 2015 and amended in 2019 and 2021. The Act directed the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) to establish a Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program to be open to all rate classes regardless of the source of the participating customers’ commodity. A Community Solar project allows renters, homeowners, tenants of apartment buildings, etc., to receive the benefits of solar without having to generate it on-site. Additionally, it enhances the State’s energy resource mix to achieve the renewable energy portfolio standard. The process works by allowing utility rate payers’ access to virtual net-metering (VNM) in which the utility distributes the electricity credit to the community solar “subscribers” via their utility bills.

Prince George's County has pledged to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 50% below 2005 levels by 2030, with a County-wide goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. On May 6, 2022, the County Executive issued Executive Order Number 5 calling for all County agencies and County Funded Operations to 1) adopt the aforementioned emissions reduction goals; 2) establish a Climate Action Implementation Task Force and Prince George’s County Resident Advisory Group for

Climate Action; and 3) the Climate Action Implementation Task Force is to develop strategies and actions to prioritize Climate Solutions in County Government Operations and to incorporate environmental justice and climate equity policy into decision making across the County Government's portfolio.

To meet the 2030 target, the Draft Climate Action Plan specifies the county needs to grow the number of solar installations from 20,000 to 80,000. As of the May 2022, there were approximately 9.8 MW of community solar operating in the County and ~ 65 MW proposed, in Pepco's service territory (source Pepco). Community solar is a key strategy to meeting this target and promoting equitable access to clean, renewable energy. The program cannot continue without legislators making it permanent or extending it via an amendment.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 613** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report with a recommendation to include a definition for a "decommissioned" Community Solar Energy Generating Systems as referenced on line 23.