

**Thursday, March 30, 2023**

**TO:** Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee; and Committee Members  
**FROM:** Michelle Dietz, The Nature Conservancy, Director of Government Relations; and Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation & Climate Policy Analyst  
**POSITION:** Support SB 469 - Task Force to Study Solar Incentives

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 469 offered by Senators Elfreth and Guzzone. In Maryland, TNC's work focuses on delivering science-based, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water and healthy living environments for our communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience in the face of a changing climate. TNC has an institutional goal to help to reduce emissions by avoiding or sequestering 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide per year by 2030. We are dedicated to a future where people and nature thrive together.

SB 469 would establish a Task Force to better understand how Maryland can deploy and implement a tax strategy to maximize rooftop solar's use. This Task Force will look at how to maximize panel installation, how to promote connectivity for renewable energy generated by rooftop solar to the grid, and how solar energy can lend itself to meeting Maryland's renewable energy goals. Task Force membership will include Maryland state government officials, including members of General Assembly and the Secretary of the Maryland Energy Administration. In addition, other Task Force members will represent Maryland's counties, the solar energy industry and individuals with experience in solar installations, thereby equipping the Task Force with local and on-the-ground expertise.

The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 set state goals to reduce emissions by 60% by 2031 and reach net-zero by 2045. Governor Moore has set an even more ambitious goal for 100% renewable energy by 2035. These goals are achievable, but only by boldly and aggressively supporting renewable energy development, especially solar, even as we look to protect our cherished forests and the farmlands we rely on for our agricultural economy. In order to meet these goals, Maryland needs to take immediate actions to mitigate emissions in the state's highest producing sectors. Renewable energy sources and a clean energy economy are essential parts of reaching state, national, and global low-carbon energy goals and combatting the negative health and environmental impacts caused by fossil fuels. By establishing a Task Force to study solar tax incentives, Maryland can position itself to implement the best possible strategies in our state to maximize renewable solar energy generation and usage across the state. Maryland decisionmakers can use this study's information and recommendations to work toward achieving our state's ambitious emissions reductions goals.

TNC commends Senators Elfreth and Guzzone for continuing to raise the bar for Maryland's climate commitments and advancing climate solutions that can provide valuable environmental, economic, and public health co-benefits for years to come. We also support the amendments recommended by the Maryland League of Conservation Voters and believe that these would strengthen the bill.

**Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 469.**