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Written Testimony
Senate Bill 169 - Green and Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations
Loan Program and Fund
Budget and Taxation Committee – January 17, 2024
Support

Background: Senate Bill 169 would establish the Green and Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations Loan Program and Fund under the Maryland Energy Administration. The fund would be established using \$5 million from the Governor's proposed budget in FY26 and an additional \$5 million in FY27, minus the amount left in the fund from the previous year. The purpose of the Program is to provide zero-interest loans to nonprofits that wish to purchase and install qualifying renewable energy systems. Nonprofits would be required to contribute at least 10% of the project's costs upfront, with priority given to nonprofits with annual budgets under \$1 million dollars.

Written Comments: The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* means to repair the world in which we live. As the advocacy arm of The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore, we represent organizations that work to educate the community on sustainability and make strides towards repairing the world. One of these entities is *The Pearlstone Center* in Reisterstown, MD, a conference center and farm that employs and teaches sustainable practices. *The Pearlstone Center* and The Associated jointly ran a [Green Loan Fund](#), similar to the fund that would be established in SB169, until 2023. The aggregate amount loaned through this fund totaled \$900,000 and the cumulative savings for nonprofits reached over \$1.5 million. Now, this program is combined with the national [Climate Action Fund](#), which is administered by Adamah – the umbrella organization that oversees the *Pearlstone Campus*, broadening the opportunities for nonprofits beyond the Baltimore region to benefit.

Further, the Associated has signed a 20-year lease for all Associated-owned properties to run on at least 50% solar. *The Pearlstone Center* currently operates on 85% solar, with 10 % coming from onsite solar and 75% coming from the Associated's large scale solar project.

Many nonprofits want to invest in green projects, but they do not have the capital reserves to fund them. SB169 would allow these nonprofits the chance to partake in a more sustainable future. We encourage this committee to join us in our mission to create a cleaner Maryland that is healthier for everyone.

For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on SB169.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.