



**HB 0258**  
**Renewable Energy - Customer-sited Solar Program**  
**Testimony before Economic Matters Committee**  
**February 22, 2024**  
**Position: Favorable**

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Sponsor Qi and members of the committee, my name is Barbara Matheson, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in support of HB0258, to establish a grant program for rooftop solar systems.

A customer-sited program exists. The purpose of this bill is to strengthen the existing program in two vital ways: by increasing the number of residential solar installations and by enabling Low to Moderate Income households to participate in the benefits of renewable energy.

First, It is critical to increase the number of solar installations. The Solar Task Force of Maryland identified the need for 130,000 new home solar installations (11,000 per year) to reach Maryland Climate Goals by 2035. But last year, Maryland rooftop solar installations DECLINED to only 5,800. We are well below the national average. Incentives such as the proposed grants would address this problem.

Secondly, we need clean energy in all places, not just some places. It is fair and just that low income, underserved, and burdened neighborhoods receive the benefits of cleaner air, lower utility bills, increased property values, job opportunities, and better health. Grants are designated for income-certified under \$50,000 annual income individuals at \$7,500 and under median income households in designated neighborhoods at \$5,000.

Solar Energy is foundationally to eliminating greenhouse gases. In Maryland, 50% of solar energy is generated by residential solar. The customer-sited solar program promotes this essential need of our state and promotes Environmental Equity.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

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