



Maryland Grain Producers Association
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House Bill 1407 - County Tier 1 Renewable Sources – Generating Systems, Capacity, and Generation – Prohibition, Studies, and Plans

Committee: Economic Matters

MGPA Position: Opposed

The Maryland Grain Producers Association (MGPA) serves as the voice of grain farmers growing corn, wheat, barley and sorghum across the state. MGPA opposes House Bill 1407 which would prohibit counties from adopting zoning laws or regulations that would limit or prohibit the siting of tier 1 renewable energy generation within their county.

When the expanded Renewable Portfolio Standard passed in 2019, 14.5% of the state's energy be produced by in-state cited solar energy. The land use of choice for solar developers seems to be agricultural land as it is available in large, flat parcels and is therefore the least expensive site for ground mounted solar. It is unclear exactly how many acres of farmland will be taken for solar development. Estimates in various reports range from 30,000 to 130,000 acres. This would represent up to 10% of Maryland farmland.

Maryland farmland and farmers are already under immense pressure from development and land conversion. From 2017 to 2022, Maryland lost 12,000 acres of agricultural land. Since the RPS was first passed in 2002, Maryland has lost nearly 100,000 acres of agricultural land. This has lasting impacts on farm families, food production and the environment.

Counties need to have the authority to thoughtfully determine where industrial solar generation best fits within the landscape of each unique county. This is not to say that counties should be able to prohibit solar on certain land uses but it is reasonable to allow counties to protect the agricultural and rural fiber of their counties while allowing solar in other areas.

MGPA urges an unfavorable report on HB1407.

Thank you,

Lindsay Thompson

Executive Director