



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

To: House Economic Matters Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support with Amendments of HB1328 Solar Energy and Energy Storage - Development and State Procurement**

On behalf of the member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit testimony in support with amendments of HB1328. This bill would authorize a county to enact a local law creating a conservation and restoration fund for a certain purpose and establishing the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Commission in the Power Plant Research Program to provide recommendations related to solar energy development and land conservation and preservation.

Renewable energy in Maryland is a step that the members of the Maryland Farm Bureau understand is coming to reach the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards of the state. The concern of the members has revolved around the feeling that prime and productive agricultural land has been the primary target for solar development. HB1328 creates a commission that would balance competing goals related to solar energy development and land conservation and preservation. Maryland Farm Bureau is happy to be included as having a seat at the table on this commission. We feel that the opportunity to have these hard solar sitting conversations will be beneficial to shaping the RPS moving forward.

The main concerns for the members of the MDFB come from the wording on page 5, lines 14-17. Being a grassroots organization, the members of the MDFB write the policy that guides our efforts. MDFB currently has policy that states, "We oppose community or commercial solar energy facilities being built on class 1 and 2 agricultural soils." The language on the lines mention speaks to the commission providing recommendations that "The appropriate approach for solar development on prime and productive soils that: does not include specific soil classification prohibitions." We would be happy to have conversations about ways that we could work on this language or have the opportunity for open conversation on the commission regarding this language.

MDFB Policy: We oppose community or commercial solar energy facilities being built on class 1 and 2 agricultural soils. We encourage the use of Brownfields as a means of solar generation in lieu of the use of prime and productive farmland.



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Maryland Farm Bureau Supports with Amendments HB1328

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations

Please Contact Tyler Hough at (443) 878-4045 with any questions