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March 7, 2024

SUPPORT: SB1054 - Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports SB1054 - Local Government – Building Permits for Residential Solar Energy and Residential Energy Storage Systems – Required Platform and Inspections, and we thank Senator Kramer for his leadership on this issue.

SB1054 will reduce permitting time and expense for rooftop Solar PV systems, following a key recommendation from the Maryland Task Force to Study Solar Incentives, by adopting the DOE-developed automated permitting tool SolarAPP+.

In December 2023, The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) issued its Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, which presents a detailed roadmap to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2031, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. In this plan, MDE calls for an all of society approach, where each sector of our economy will be called on to use best practices to reduce emissions. In addition, Governor Moore has announced Maryland’s commitment to 100% clean energy generation and consumption by 2035, which will require bold increases in the amount of solar energy generated in the state.

Despite the state having these strong renewable energy goals, less than 6% of Maryland homes have rooftop solar. ¹Currently, obtaining a permit to install solar and battery storage can take weeks, and even months. ²The Solar Energy Industries Association estimates that soft costs like permitting add up to \$7,000 per site. This reduces the number of installations in the state, making our climate and resiliency goals more difficult to reach.

Solar APP+, as directed by SB1054, will help to reduce these permitting costs significantly. This system is in place in more than 230 counties and municipalities across the U.S., including Montgomery County, MD, as well as major cities such as Denver, CO, Phoenix, AZ, and Houston, TX. This has reduced permitting times to less than a day in some jurisdictions, while also relieving strain on local permitting authorities. The bottom line is that SolarAPP+ will help Maryland achieve its climate goals, increase the use of battery storage, and reduce costs for both homeowners and municipalities.

Maryland LCV urges a Favorable report on SB1054.

¹ Route-Fifty/SolarAPP+ Foundation: [Government software that shines: Solar permitting’s bright future in 2024](#)

² Solar Energy Industries Association: [SolarAPP+: Cutting the Cost of Residential Solar](#)