



Educate. Advocate. Innovate.

Date: February 26, 2024
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
From: Grayson Middleton, Government Affairs Manager
Re: SB 685 – Program Open Space – Renewable Energy and Storage – **Letter of Information**

Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) is the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, processing companies, and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware. We would like to offer our perspective on the conversation around solar on state and rural lands.

Chicken growers were some of the first to widely adopt solar technology in Maryland, and DCA fully supports its use as a cost-effective and environmentally friendly energy source.

However, as the state looks to expand solar siting, we want the preservation of prime and productive agricultural land to be prioritized. In our legislative policy, we have specifically requested that state-owned lands be used for solar farms, in addition to urban settings and small-scale solar operations in specific areas of agricultural counties. We think that starting the conversation on the use of state lands for solar is a good way to start taking some of the pressure from farms, which have been the center of focus for many seeking to expand solar energy in the state. We believe some of the current proposals to develop upwards of 20,000 acres of agricultural land for solar is untenable and detrimental to the agricultural economy, and we hope that the utilization of state lands and programs such as Open Space will make those proposals wholly unnecessary.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at Grayson Middleton at middleton@dcachicken.com or 410-490-3329.

Sincerely,

Grayson Middleton
Government Affairs Manager