



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 7, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 1082 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Solar Energy and Energy Storage – Development and State Procurement

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides the following information regarding Senate Bill 1082. The Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) would be tasked with the majority of the Department’s impacts including meeting coordination, technical assistance, and leading the development of recommendations on solar siting affecting agriculture and land use. There are also no additional funds provided in the bill for increased PPRP costs, staff, and the increase in PPRP’s consultant’s time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

PPRP coordinates the environmental and socioeconomic statewide generation and transmission CPCNs. As such, PPRP has the expertise and experience to fulfill these complicated tasks with proficiency. In addition, PPRP completed the *Siting and Safety Best Practices for Battery Energy Storage Systems Report* in February 2022, a comprehensive analysis of battery energy systems and safety recommendations. This will set the basis for the required reports in this bill but significant staff and consultant time will still be required. PPRP has staff and energy storage experts as consultants who can provide technical expertise as required but an expert in battery storage will likely be required through our consultants to serve as a subject matter expert.

The Power Plant Research Program at the Department is funded through the Environmental Trust Fund Surcharge on all electricity customers in the State. The current rate of \$.0001500/kWh has been in place for the last 35 years and if PPRP’s workload continues to be increased, the current funding levels from the Environmental Trust Fund will not be able to meet future and current workloads.

BILL EXPLANATION:

This bill would create a fund using payments from solar generating facilities on agricultural lands; establish the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Advisory Commission; procure 200 megawatts of solar energy for the State; and require MEA’s Solar Technical Assistance Program to analyze land suitable for solar. SB1082 significantly impacts DNR by requiring the Department to staff the Utility-Scale Solar Design and Siting Advisory Commission through PPRP. Two reporting deadlines are included: by the end of 2024, recommendations on specific technical aspects of siting solar; and by the end of 2025 recommendations for Best Management Practices and a Model Policy for the development of solar generating stations (>2 MW), as well as decommissioning standards. These are very tight

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

deadlines in light of PPRP's current and projected workload. The bill also requires the PSC to convene at least once every 10 years. SB1082 also directly invokes the PPRP to participate with the Commission's Energy Storage Working Group to develop model permitting and fire suppression standards for energy storage devices.