

Committee: Economic Matters
Testimony: Solar Energy and Energy Storage - Development and State Procurement (SB 1082)
Position: Favorable with Amendments
Hearing Date: March 7, 2024

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Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund, we urge a favorable report on SB 1082. In 2022 Maryland missed 45% of our in-state solar generation mandate. The state was required to source 5.5% of our electricity from solar in Maryland, but only 3%. As a result, utilities were forced to pay over \$85 million in Alternative Compliance Payments, the cost of which they passed on to ratepayers. Maryland has not been able to meet our in-state solar generation requirements because some counties in Maryland have passed defacto bans on new solar being built on the ground.

It's imperative that authorities having jurisdiction (AHJ) do not unnecessarily preclude or restrict the construction of commercial solar energy facilities. By implementing reasonable regulations and guidelines, we can facilitate the responsible development of solar projects while safeguarding agricultural land and maintaining the integrity of our rural communities.

CCAN Action Fund supports the theory behind the bill. However, as applied, the bill does not address concerns of zoning laws and other regulations by authorities having jurisdiction that restrict or prohibit the construction of commercial solar energy facilities.

The following language should be amended to the bill:

“Counties may not establish siting standards for solar facilities that explicitly or functionally preclude development of commercial solar energy facilities, including prohibitions on zoning, density, and/or soil classifications, and may not adopt zoning regulations that disallow, permanently or temporarily, commercial solar energy facilities from being developed or operated.”

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